

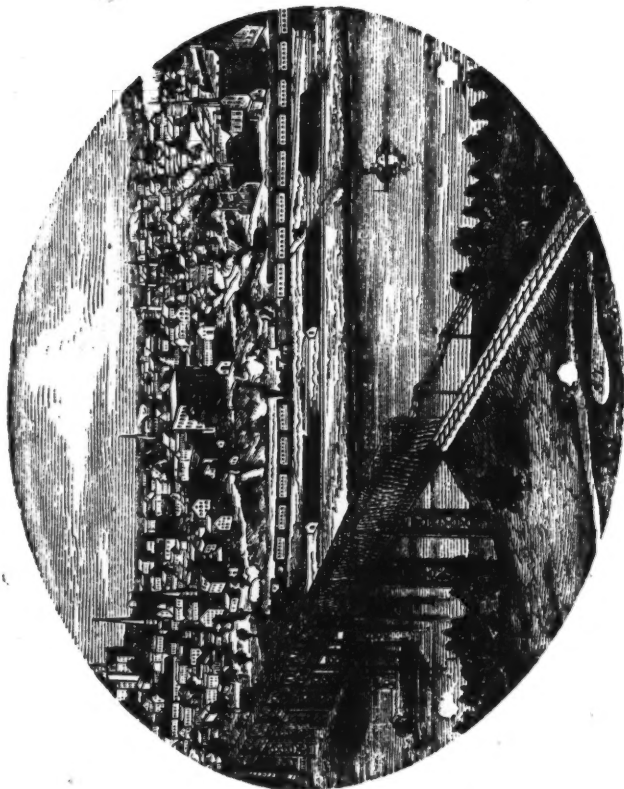
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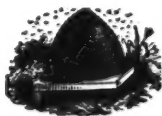


BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF OMAHA.

EARLY
HISTORY OF OMAHA:
OR,
WALKS AND TALKS AMONG THE OLD SETTLERS:
A SERIES OF SKETCHES IN THE SHAPE OF
A CONNECTED NARRATIVE
OF THE
EVENTS AND INCIDENTS OF EARLY TIMES IN OMAHA,
TOGETHER WITH A BRIEF MENTION OF THE
MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS OF LATER YEARS.

(By ALFRED SORENSON,
CITY EDITOR OF THE "OMAHA DAILY BEE."

ILLUSTRATED
WITH NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS, MANY OF THEM BEING FROM ORIGINAL
SKETCHES DRAWN ESPECIALLY FOR THIS WORK BY
CHARLES S. HUNTINGTON.



OMAHA:
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PREFACE.

In this centennial year, now drawing to a close, during which nearly everybody seemed to be hunting up the records of the past, so full of interest to us of the present and to those of the hereafter, it appeared eminently proper to me that an early history of Omaha should and ought to be written, and early in the year I concluded to undertake the task. The idea, however, was not fully conceived until after Gen. Estabrook had prepared and read his Centennial Historical Address on the Fourth of July. That address was brief and general, but good as far as it went. But it did not go very far, with all due respect to Gen. Estabrook. Knowing that Omaha had an early history full of exciting and interesting incidents—a history that perhaps is unequalled in many respects by that of any other western city—I determined then and there to at once carry out my idea of a history of this city, which the reader will find embodied in this little volume.

I immediately commenced the work in a systematic manner, beginning with hunting up the bottom facts, and building up on this foundation. During a five years' connection with the daily press of this city I have had numerous opportunities to make and cultivate the acquaintance of the "old settlers." I have improved those opportunities, and have never neglected to make a memorandum on the tablets of my memory of whatever of interest concerning the early history of Omaha, that I may have heard during my talks and walks with the "old settlers."

Those "old settlers," by the way, are a very entertaining set of persons, possessed with a charming vein of humor which runs through all their recitals of early times, and I have passed many a pleasant hour in their society, on different occasions, while in search

of material with which to construct a readable history of Omaha. They can spin a yarn to their own satisfaction as well as to that of their audience. All that is needed to set most of them going is to draw them out, in a reportorial way. Some of them, indeed, may be said to have a little egotism mixed with a good deal of pride—characteristics that have been developed by the rapid and substantial growth of the beautiful city which they assisted to found and build up. Their pride is justly excusable on this account. They have seen and watched with a tender care the infant grow from childhood to a healthy and vigorous manhood, as it were.

Omaha's history is well worth handing down to posterity, and I believe it will prove of deep interest to the many thousands of people now living here and in the immediate vicinity; to those who shall come after us; and also to those who have removed hence to distant points, but whose memories still cling round the spot with a tender fondness.

Believing that there was a demand for such a history as this, and knowing that such a work, carefully compiled and carefully written, would meet with the hearty approval and substantial support of the citizens of Omaha, I did not hesitate in the enterprise. I have endeavored to present the facts—and facts only—in a readable shape, and I know that the style in which they are clothed, is an improvement, in some measure at least, on the necessarily hurried, rough, and perhaps reckless writing of the daily newspaper reporter. I will say this much for myself; as to farther criticism, be it favorable or unfavorable, I leave the reader to make it.

Each chapter will be found complete in itself—a sort of sketch. Yet the chapters or sketches are so arranged that they form what may be properly termed a connected narrative of the early events and incidents in Omaha's history. I have found the writing of this history an entertaining employment of leisure hours, and have hardly missed the time so spent. Little by little it grew to a volume of respectable dimensions. So it was with the city of Omaha, and so will she continue to increase in size, importance, wealth, culture and general loveliness, and never shall any envious rival snatch from her brow the laurel wreath and the title entwined therein, which she has so justly won—"The Queen City of the Missouri Valley."

The early history of Omaha is to some extent the early history of Nebraska, and this is true to some degree even in the history of later years. Hence we often hear even now our city referred to, by jealous rivals in our State, as the "State of Omaha," and the State as its suburbs.

The greater portion of this volume has never before appeared in print. Some of it, however, has been published before, but in different shape. My information has been obtained from the very best and most reliable sources—from the "old settlers" themselves, from the early legislative journals, and from the early newspapers. For valuable assistance and information I am indebted to Hon. A. J. Hanscom, Hon. A. J. Poppleton, Gen. Estabrook, A. D. Jones, Esq., Byron Reed, Esq., Dr. Miller, John A. Creighton, John T. Bell, Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Snowden, Mrs. W. D. Brown, Judge Porter, Martin Dunham, Thomas Riley, Maj. Armstrong and many other prominent "old settlers."

I have drawn rather liberally on Dr. Miller, whose pen has at different times been employed in recording interesting reminiscences, which, by the way, have been about the only early history of Omaha that has been given to the public.

But to Byron Reed, Esq., more than to any other one person, am I indebted for the accuracy and completeness of this history. He has a wonderfully retentive memory, and can give names, dates, locations, and descriptions of persons, lands, events and incidents for the last twenty years without reference to a paper, document, or book. He is a walking encyclopedia of general information from A to Z. He has in his possession more valuable historical books, papers and documents about Omaha and Nebraska than any other man in the State. He has taken a deep interest in this work and has imparted to me a vast amount of local information and has allowed me free access to his newspaper files, legislative journals, books and records. He has also read the proofs from beginning to end, so it will be seen that his assistance has enabled me to present a reliable history, which without his aid would necessarily have been incomplete.

No expense has been spared to make this volume attractive. Its typography will compare with that of any establishment in the East,

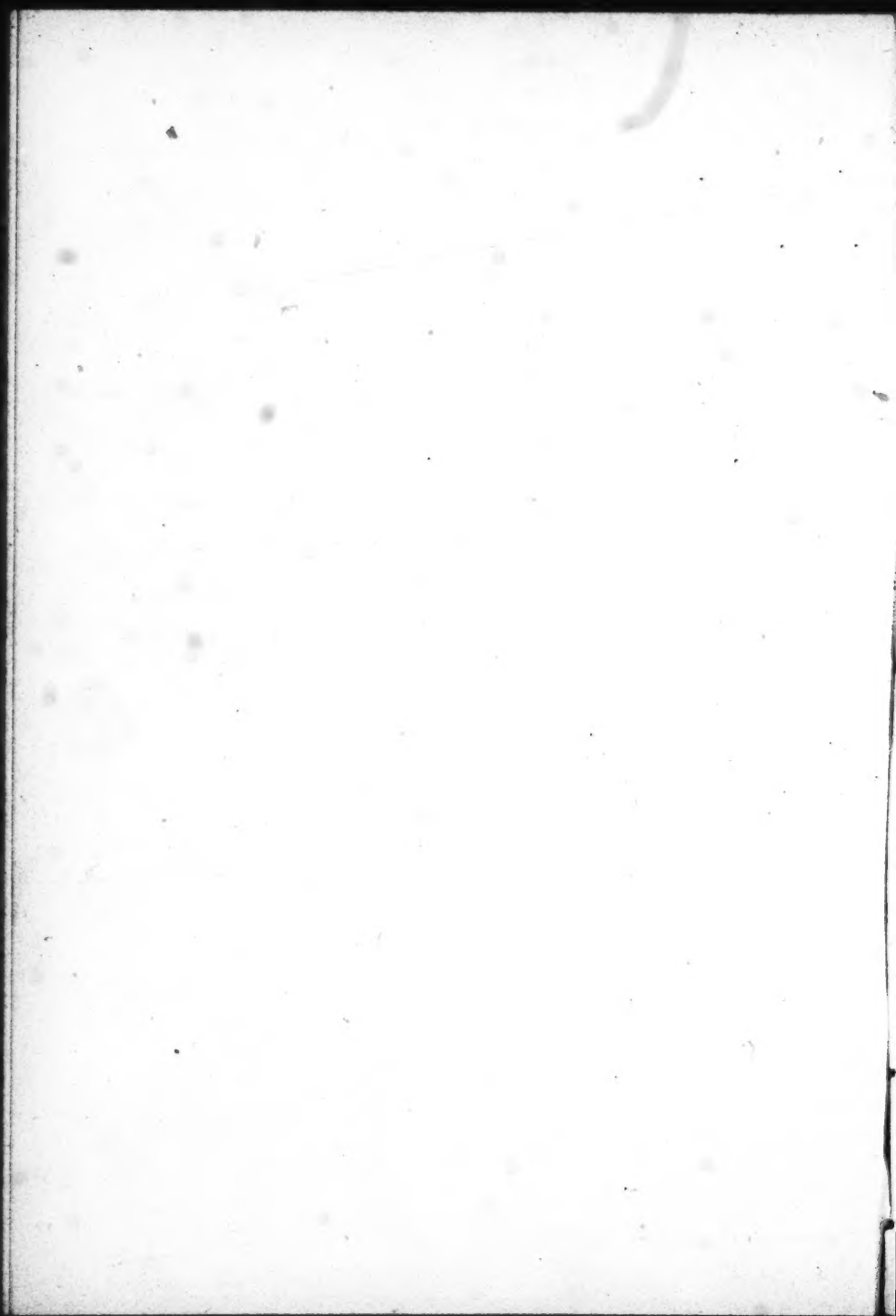
and speaks volumes of praise for the job office of the Omaha Daily Bee. Its illustrations, engraved by the Chicago Engraving Company, especially for this book, cost over \$250, and are as fine as will be found in any ordinary work. The original sketches were drawn by Charles S. Huntington, of this city, according to the ideas given him by myself. The binding—which is an elegant dress in the latest style—was done by the Omaha Book Company. The entire cost of the edition was \$1,275. The expense, however, was entirely covered by subscriptions before a single type was set, a canvass having been made by myself, and I cheerfully acknowledge the fact that sufficient names were secured not only to guarantee the above amount but something besides. I have endeavored to give the public their "money's worth," and I think no one can or will say that I have not done so.

One thing that has presented itself to my mind, in the course of my researches, is the need of an historical society, embracing not only Omaha but the whole State, and I here make the suggestion that such a society be at once formed. There is plenty of material, and there are enough persons who would take part in it to make it a success. I believe that attempts have been made in this direction at different times. The defunct "Old Settlers' Association" was such an organization and it is to be regretted that it was allowed to die. Should an historical society be organized it would be a wise plan not to make it in any way exclusive. The membership should embrace everybody who can or will contribute in any way to its usefulness, to its records, and to its support.

OMAHA, NOVEMBER, 1876.

ALF. S.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF OMAHA.



EARLY HISTORY OF OMAHA.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOTTOM FACTS.

LEWIS AND CLARK'S EXPEDITION—THEIR ARRIVAL AT THE FUTURE SITE OF OMAHA—THEIR COUNCIL WITH THE INDIANS AT THE COUNCIL BLUFF, NOW CALLED FORT CALHOUN—OLD INDIAN FORTIFICATIONS AND MOUNDS AT OMAHA—SOME HISTORICAL INQUIRIES ANSWERED.



IN the year 1804, which is a long ways back for a western city to go for the bottom facts of its history, Lewis and Clark, the well known government explorers, started out on their long, memorable, and adventurous expedition up the Missouri river and its tributaries, penetrating the vast extent of territory known as the great North West, and included in the term "Indian Territory." It was an unexplored country, and was embraced in what is known as the Louisiana purchase from the French, which was consummated in 1803. The expedition consisted of about thirty-five men, well armed and equipped and supplied with three boats for the undertaking.

By reference to the journal of Lewis and Clark, published in 1814, we find that they arrived at the mouth of the Platte in the latter part of July, 1804, where they laid up two or three days for repairs.

The following extract from their journal, showing their approach and arrival at the spot where Omaha was afterwards located, will be found of interest to the reader :

"JULY 27.—Having completed the object of our stay, we set sail with a pleasant breeze from the North West. The two horses swam over to the Southern [Western] shore, along which we went, passing by an island, at three and a half miles, formed by a pond, fed by springs; three miles further is a large sand island in the middle of the river; the land on the South [West] being high and covered with timber; that on the North [East] a prairie. At ten and a half miles from our encampment, we saw and examined a curious collection of graves or mounds, on the South [West] side of the river. Not far from a low piece of land and a pond, is a tract of about two hundred acres in extent, which is covered with mounds of different heights, shapes and sizes; some of sand, and some of both earth and sand; the largest being near the river. These mounds indicate the position of the ancient village of the Ottoes, before they retired to the protection of the Pawnees. After making fifteen miles, we encamped on the South [East] on the bank of a high, handsome prairie, with lofty cotton-wood in groves, near the river."

It will be noticed that the chroniclers used the word South, when it should have been West, and North when it should have been East, with reference to the river as it runs past Omaha. This is easily accounted for by the fact that in those days the Missouri river was generally supposed to run east and west, or nearly so.

The curious collection of graves or mounds, and the tract of two hundred acres covered with mounds of different heights, shapes and sizes, were undoubtedly included in that portion of the city bounded on the south by Farnham street, west by Eleventh street, and on the north and east by the river bottoms. At different periods in the history of the city, while excavating cellars or grading streets in this vicinity,

Indian graves have been discovered, and bones and trinkets and relics have been exhumed. Numerous mounds, which have long ago disappeared, were found here in early days. About three years ago while lower Douglas street was being graded down, an Indian's skeleton was unearthed on the premises then owned and occupied by ex-councilman John Campbell, at the south-east corner of Eleventh and Douglas streets. It was only a few months ago, while the workmen were engaged in excavating for the foundation of the Third Ward school house, at the south-east corner of Dodge and Eleventh streets, that they dug up two Indian skeletons, with a lot of relics, among which were numerous scalp rings, to which the hair still clung. Skeletons have also been found outside of the limit above described, but the evidence is sufficient to convince us that this is the spot mentioned by Lewis and Clark.

Here then we have *the* bottom fact in Omaha's history—the foundation on which we shall proceed to construct our fabric. We shall now follow Lewis and Clark up the river for a short distance in order to snatch from Council Bluffs some of her glory—to show that she stole her name.

From the journal of Lewis and Clark we learn that they proceeded up stream, and on August 3rd, in the morning, they held a council with fourteen Otoe (now spelled Otoe) and Missouri Indians, who had come to the spot at sunset of the day before, accompanied by a Frenchman, who resided among them, and who acted as interpreter for the council, which had previously been arranged by runners sent out for the purpose.

At the appointed hour the Indians with their six chiefs, assembled under an awning, formed with the mainsail of one of the boats, in the presence of the exploring party, who were paraded for the occasion. The change in the government, from France to the United States, was announced to them, and they were promised protection.

The six chiefs replied, each in his turn, according to rank, expressing joy and satisfaction at the change. They wished to be recommended to the great father, the President, that they might obtain supplies and facilities for trading. They wanted arms for defence, and asked mediation between themselves and the Mahas,* with whom they were at war.

Lewis and Clark promised to fulfill the requests of the Indians, and wanted some of them to accompany the expedition to the next nation, but they declined to do so for fear of being killed. Numerous presents were distributed among the Indians, and on account of the incidents just related the explorers were induced to give the place the name of the *Council Bluff*, the situation of which, as they record it, was exceedingly favorable for a fort or a trading post.

Here we take leave of Lewis and Clark. The place of their council—the Council Bluff—was about sixteen or eighteen miles in a straight line north of Omaha, and about forty miles by the river—the site of old Ft. Calhoun, and now the location of the village of that name. It has been conclusively settled that this point was the historical Council Bluffs. Father de Smet, the well known Jesuit missionary, who was considered good authority concerning any question about the Missouri river country, over which he had often traveled, and who lived where Council Bluffs is now located, opposite Omaha, in 1838 and 1839, in a letter to A. D. Jones, dated St. Louis, December 9, 1867, said in answer to some historical interrogatories, that Ft. Calhoun took the name of Ft. Atkinson, which was built on the very spot where the council was held by Lewis and Clark, and was the highest and first military post above the mouth of the Nebraska or Platte river. †

* The Omahas are called the Mahas throughout the entire journal of Lewis and Clark, as well as in all other early records. The "O" is a prefix of comparatively recent date.

† Ft. Atkinson was built in 1821, and was evacuated in 1827 or '28.

In answer to the inquiry of Mr. Jones, as to where old Ft. Croghan was located, Father de Smet replied: "After the evacuation of Ft. Atkinson or Calhoun, either in 1827 or '28, or thereabouts, the troops came down and made winter quarters on Cow Island—Captain Labarge states it was called Camp Croghan. The next spring the flood disturbed the soldiers and they came down and established Ft. Leavenworth. Col. Leavenworth was commandant at the breaking up of Ft. Atkinson."

Mr. Jones also asked Father de Smet if he knew who built or occupied the fortifications, the remains of which were (in 1868) on the east bank of Omaha. Father de Smet says: "The remains alluded to must be the site of the old trading post of Mr. Heart. When it was in existence the Missouri River ran up to the trading post. In 1832 the river left it, and since that time it goes by the name of 'Heart's Cut-off,' having [leaving] a large lake above Council Bluff city."

Right here, in the above paragraph, we are made aware of the interesting fact that the ever-shifting Missouri river ran close up to the bluffs on the west side; whereas, now the channel has changed its location fully half a mile to the eastward—at least that far from the foot of Douglas and Farnham streets, leaving between it and the bluffs a vast tract of sandy bottoms, now occupied by lumber yards, railroad tracks, the Union Pacific Shops and the Smelting Works.

These fortifications were near the junction of Capitol avenue and Ninth street, and Dodge and Tenth streets. The well defined outlines of a fort, or some other kind of defensive works, were plainly visible until obliterated by the government corral built there during the war. This fort, as has been well maintained by A. D. Jones in opposition to different opinions, was built by the Otoes for protection against hostile tribes. Some have held that these now extinct fortifications were none other than old Ft. Croghan, indicated upon the

early maps, but Mr. Jones, who is the best authority in our opinion, and he is sustained by numerous other old settlers beside himself, is certain that Ft. Croghan was upon the east side of the river between Council Bluffs and Trader's Point, the latter point, the original place being no longer visible to the naked eye, having been washed away by the Missouri.

Another inquiry which was propounded by Mr. Jones, who, while secretary of the Omaha Old Settlers' Association in 1867-68, evidently faithfully performed his duty and was frequently engaged in hunting up the records of the past, was: "Do you know of either soldiers or Indians ever having resided on the Omaha plateau?" Father de Smet's answer was: "I do not know. A noted trader, by the name of T. B. Roye, had a trading post from 1825 till 1828, established on the Omaha plateau, and may be the first white man, who built the first cabin, on the beautiful plateau, where now stands the flourishing city of Omaha."

CHAPTER II.

THE MORMONS.

A FEW LINES OF MORMON HISTORY—WINTER QUARTERS—MILLER'S HILL, AFTERWARDS KANESVILLE, AND FINALLY COUNCIL BLUFFS—HOW COUNCIL BLUFFS STOLE HER NAME.



RIGHT here we wish to bring in a brief chapter of Mormon history. The Mormons, driven to this western country, came to Iowa, and finally, after looking around for a short time, they all, with the exception of some stragglers, crossed the Missouri river during the years 1845 and 1846, and located a settlement of over 15,000 people, six miles north of Omaha, calling the place Winter Quarters, by which name it went until seven or eight years afterwards, when it was changed to Florence, which it has ever since been called.

The Indians in their neighborhood complained to their agent that the Mormons were cutting too much timber, and they were accordingly ordered off the land, which belonged to the redskins. A large number of them then recrossed the river to the Iowa side, and temporarily settled in the ravines among the bluffs. An expedition consisting of eighty wagons, with four men to each wagon, was sent westward to hunt up a permanent location. They stopped not at any point, for any great length of time, till they arrived at Salt Lake. The expeditionists were here charmed with the beauties of the spot, and were pleased with its remoteness from their religious

persecutors. Having made a settlement there, they sent back for the remainder of the Mormons, the most of whom proceeded on their pilgrimage to the New Jerusalem—Salt Lake—between the years 1853 and 1860. Nearly all their trains were started from Florence. A few of the Mormons still reside at Florence, Omaha and Council Bluffs, but none of them practice polygamy.

While the Mormons were the principal population of Council Bluffs it was called Miller's Hill for a short time, and then changed to Kanesville, in honor of a Mormon elder named Kane, which name it retained for several years.

In 1852 the citizens of Kanesville sent for A. D. Jones, who was a surveyor in his younger days, and was then residing at Glenwood, Iowa, to come and survey their town for them. At Trader's Point, below Kanesville, was a post-office called Council Bluffs, and everybody coming to this country at that time, would, upon being asked, say that they were going to Council Bluffs. After Kanesville had been surveyed as a town by Mr. Jones, the citizens wanted a new name for the place, and agreed upon a change. The question then arose as to what it should be. Mr. Jones, it is said, suggested the name of Council Bluffs, on the ground that they ought to have a name that would catch all the mail matter as well as the emigrants—scattered all the way from Sioux City south to Sidney—to whom it was directed. As nearly all the letters for these emigrants were being directed to the Council Bluffs post-office at Trader's Point, the suggestion to steal that name and add to it the word "City," making the new Kanesville post-office Council Bluffs City, was accepted. The place was accordingly called Council Bluffs City for a while, thus securing control of all the mail matter of the rival office, which was finally broken up. When Council Bluffs City got strong enough, the citizens demanded and obtained a charter, and then the "City" was dropped out, the bill being introduced

by Hadley D. Johnson, who was a member of the Iowa legislature, and who afterwards became a resident of Omaha.

Thus it will be seen that Council Bluffs stole her name. It has also been clearly demonstrated that she is not the original Council Bluff of Lewis and Clark. Gen. Estabrook truly says, "This, if the first, is not the only good thing tributary to her notoriety that Council Bluffs has stolen from this side of the river.

CHAPTER III.

THE PIONEERS.

WM. D. BROWN'S "LONE TREE FERRY"—MR. BROWN IN 1853 TAKES UP A CLAIM COVERING THE FUTURE SITE OF OMAHA—ORGANIZATION OF THE STEAM FERRY COMPANY—OTHER CLAIMS MADE DURING THIS YEAR—A. D. JONES' CLAIM—MR. JONES APPLIES FOR A POSTMASTERSHIP AND RECEIVES HIS APPOINTMENT IN THE SPRING OF 1854.



MAHA, as it has been aptly said, had a history before it had a name. In the opening chapter of this work, we have given the history—as much as was in our power to obtain—of the spot where Lewis and Clark landed in 1804, and on which Omaha was destined to be founded, fifty years afterwards. The intervening period is not known to have been marked by any other important historical incidents than those already related. Taking a jump, as we might say, of about half a century, we come to the time when Omaha sprang into existence.

The majority of the founders, or first inhabitants of Omaha, came over from Council Bluffs and vicinity, where they had resided one, two, or three or more years. The California emigration, which had been in progress for three or four years, was then at its height, and many of the emigrants who had started for the occident with golden dreams and visions halted by the wayside in Iowa, attracted by the natural beauties and the fertile resources of that State. Council Bluffs thus became the stopping place of many who aban-

doned the idea of making the long, tedious and dangerous overland trip to California, and of these there were many who afterwards came to Omaha and permanently located here.

William D. Brown, a pioneer, who had from his youth always been a little in advance of civilization in its westward march, was one of the many who started for California during the years 1849 and 1850. He had been for several years a resident of Mount Pleasant, Henry County, Iowa, of which county he was the first sheriff, having been elected to the office in January, 1837. He stopped at Council Bluffs, and seeing that there was money to be made in the ferry business across the Missouri river at this point, to accommodate the California travel, which was being ferried at Florence, Bellevue and at other places, he embarked in the enterprise shortly afterwards, either in 1851 or 1852. Obtaining a charter from the Pottawattamie County Commissioners, he equipped his new ferry line with a flat-boat which was rowed with oars. This ferry was for a long time called the "Lone Tree Ferry," from a solitary tree at which the boat arrived and departed, on this side of the river.

The Lone Tree stood for several years, and the immediate vicinity became quite a notorious spot, owing to the ferry landing being continued there. Although it may be getting a little ahead of our narrative, it will not be entirely out of place to relate an incident that occurred near the Lone Tree in 1860. A noted desperado named Bill Lane had established a saloon and dance house of very loud character there. It had become a very rough place, and was working a great deal of harm. One night a crowd of men went to his "ranche," and gave him twenty-four hours to leave town. In a few hours he packed up everything, even the lumber of which his shanty had been constructed, and putting his effects on a steamboat he left for Leavenworth.

Notwithstanding his poor facilities for transportation, the ferry

business proved a profitable undertaking to Mr. Brown, the pioneer ferryman, who was also the first pioneer of Omaha. He also engaged in the hotel business at Council Bluffs, being for some time a half partner in the Bluff City House.

The beautiful and commanding position of the future site of Omaha ; its plateau, where now stands the business portion of the town ; its numerous hills, especially Capitol Hill, one and all now thickly dotted with magnificent residences and picturesque grounds ; all these attractive features combined, impressed upon the far-seeing Brown the fact that this spot was destined to be the location of a great city at some day. "Westward the star of empire takes its way." The great tide of travel was then, as it is now, towards the occident. The site of Omaha was west of Council Bluffs, and it was a well known fact that for years the cities on the line of the western emigration which were located on the west bank of the streams had always soon eclipsed those on the east bank in growth. The site was near the river, and at that time the head of navigation on the Missouri. These facts also had great weight with the men who were to found the city.

Mr. Brown, while superintending his ferry, frequently came over to the Nebraska shore and looked over the location of the proposed town, the idea of starting which originated with himself. He made a claim in 1853, which about covered the town site as it was afterwards laid out. His claim was the first made, and it was located at a time before any treaty was effected with the Indians, which important event did not transpire till the next year.

Of course many of the people of Council Bluffs, who afterwards located at Omaha, undoubtedly took advantage of Mr. Brown's ferry to visit this lovely spot, either in excursions for pleasure, or in small prospecting parties, to get an idea of the situation with a view of making claims, and of carrying out, at the earliest practic-

able moment, the project of Mr. Brown—the idea of which he had imparted to others—of founding a town, the future great city of the Missouri Valley.

Among those, besides Mr. Brown, who favorably considered the enterprise, were Dr. Enos Lowe, Jesse Lowe, Jesse Williams, and Joseph H. D. Street, all of whom resided at Kanesville or Council Bluffs. This was in June, 1853, and on July 23d, 1853, a steam ferry company, under the name of "The Council Bluffs and Nebraska Ferry Company," was organized under the general corporation laws of Iowa, their charter to continue twenty years. The president was Dr. Enos Lowe, and the other members were Tootle & Jackson, S. S. Bayliss, Joseph H. D. Street, Henn and Williams, Samuel R. Curtis, Tanner and Downs, and others.

Mr. Brown, not having means enough to carry out his scheme alone, had previously sold six-eighths of his ferry interest and of his claim to most of the above persons, and the organization of the Ferry Company was the result, Mr. Brown still retaining his interest, which consisted of two-eighths. He afterwards sold one of these eighths to S. R. Curtis, who did not comply with the terms of purchase, and the land included in this share was accordingly reclaimed by Brown. Curtis, in the course of events, set up his claim to it again, and the result was, in after years, a long and tedious law-suit, which was finally compromised.

Among those who crossed the river in 1853, to prospect, was A. D. Jones, Tom Allen and Bill Allen, who came over in November, in a leaky scow, borrowed from Mr. Brown. One rowed, one steered, and the other had all he could do to bail out the water as fast as it came in. They landed down the river in the vicinity of where Boyd's packing house is now located. They there staked out their claims, the north line of Mr. Jones' claim being marked out on the north side of the present residence of Herman Kountze. All that

land was long ago attached to the city proper in an addition. Mr. Jones maintains that his was the first claim, and that he is entitled to the honor of being called the pioneer squatter and first settler; but there is a difference of opinion on this matter, as will be shown in the course of this truthful history. He was notified to leave by the Indian agent, Mr. Hepner, as the Indian title to the land had not been yet extinguished. Other claimants, too, were served the same way, we suppose, and the command was obeyed.

Mr. Jones then applied for the establishment of a post-office here, a piece of strategy to enable him to hold his claim. The application was made through J. D. Test, of Council Bluffs, and resulted successfully in the spring of 1854. We have seen the original documents, and therefore know of what we write.

The correspondence was as follows:

WASHINGTON CITY, May 6, 1854.

Dr. TEST:—Yours of the 10th ultimo, relative to Omaha City post-office, has been received. I got the office established to-day, and had A. D. Jones appointed postmaster. Yours truly,

BERNHART HENN.

WASHINGTON CITY, May 6, 1854.

A. D. JONES, Omaha City, Nebraska Ter.,

Dear Sir:—Yours of the 15th instant has been received, but as the post route bill has already received final action, I cannot carry out your suggestion as to the route from Council Bluffs to Omaha City at this session. Perhaps, however, it is not necessary, as it is already covered by the route I had established, last Congress, from Council Bluffs to Ft. Laramie, and although said route has not been let, you may get that part put in operation by petitioning the Department to do so; which course I would suggest be adopted at

once. If you do so, send me the petition directed to Fairfield, and I will forward them.

Yours truly,

BERNHART HENN.

This then must have been the very first letter directed to Omaha City, and that, too, at a time before there was anybody living here, and before the town was surveyed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INDIANS.

EXTINGUISHMENT OF THE INDIAN TITLE TO THE LAND—THE FONTENELLE FAMILY—LOGAN FONTENELLE, CHIEF OF THE OMAHAS—HIS DEATH AND BURIAL—A MAN SKINNED ALIVE BY THE INDIANS.



URING the month of February, 1854, Maj. Gatewood, Indian agent for the tribes in this vicinity, called them together at Bellevue, which had been for a long time an Indian mission, and there discussed the subject of their making a treaty by which they would yield up the title to their land. The treaties were made in March and April, which resulted in the passage of the enabling act of Nebraska Territory in 1854. Franklin Pierce was then President, and George W. Manypenny, Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

The tribes who signed the treaties were the Otoes, the Missouris, and the Omahas. The terms of the treaty with each were liberal and satisfactory, and little or no trouble was experienced in their removal to the reservations provided for them, the removal being effected gradually within a year or two.

Shon-ga-ska, or Logan Fontenelle, who was the chief of the Omahas at this time, was a very intelligent man, and the history of the Fontenelle family, in this connection, will prove an interesting chapter to the reader.

Lucien Fontenelle, born in New Orleans about the year 1800, of French parents, was a gentleman of good education, and one that possessed every indication of having been well raised. He came to this western country about the year 1814, in the employ of Major Joshua Pilcher, and took an Omaha squaw—a high-toned belle of the tribe—for his wife. He was engaged in the Indian trade in 1835 in the vicinity of Fort Laramie with a Mr. Drips. The building was standing at Bellevue until a few years ago, and it may be there yet, in which they stored their goods for the mountain trade.

He treated his Indian wife very kindly, and gave his children a good education in St. Louis. The children left St. Louis in 1836 or 1837, and resided at Bellevue with their mother. There were four boys and one girl.

In 1839 Lucien Fontenelle abandoned his mountain trade, and lived with his family till his death, which occurred in the spring of 1840, and was caused by the too excessive use of liquor, which brought on *delirium tremens*.

For the following interesting facts concerning the Fontenelle family we are indebted to an "Old Pawnee," who has written several chapters of the early history of Nebraska for the Omaha *Herald*, at various times, and it is from one of these sketches that we quote:

"Logan, the oldest son, was a remarkable boy; active, with quick perception, and beloved by all who knew him, but he imbibed something of the habit of his father, and was finally killed by the Sioux, but not till he had fought bravely to the last. Albert was a fine boy, of good disposition, had partially learned the blacksmith's trade, and at his death was Pawnee government smith, with John Snuffen. He was thrown from a mule, which caused his death. Tecumseh was killed by Louis Neal (brother-in-law) in a drunken frolic. He was an intelligent man, but not naturally as agreeable as the other children. Henry and Susan (Mrs. Neal) were still living in 1870

or 1871, when this sketch was written. Heary served as an apprentice to the wagon business in St. Louis, and is very handy with tools; in fact, they were a remarkable family, had been well raised and were gentle in their manners. The mother was a remarkable woman, and in 1834 performed a brave act.

"There was an Iowa Indian who headed a party of Iowas to pay the Omahas a friendly visit, who were then living at or near the present site of Omaha City. After being well received and kindly treated by the Omahas they left the village to return home, and near Bellevue met a small party of Omahas and killed some four of Mrs. Fontenelle's relatives, and stuck a spear through a half breed Omaha boy (after killing his mother) by the name of Karsener. They stuck the spear through the left breast, and pinned him to the ground. Some of the Indians said 'Don't kill that boy; he is a white boy.' The Iowa Indians replied, 'A white man's blood is the same to us as an Omaha's,' and left the boy pinned to the ground.

"Mrs. Fontenelle from that time sought revenge on that Iowa, and made some two or three attempts to kill him, but did not succeed. At length the time came. At the Bellevue landing stood an old trading post, in which there were several buildings, with the Otoe, Omaha and Pawnee smith-shops and the houses of the employees, and Rev. Moses Merrill and family. This same Iowa, with others, was there, and one of the assistant smiths, by the name of Shaw, had procured a keg of whisky, of which he was so extremely fond that he took too much of the article, and the Iowas broke open the shop and stole his keg. They imbibed so freely that they were getting up a jubilee, when Hannibal Dougherty, the agent's brother, took an axe, and broke the keg and spilled the whisky. There was an old Frenchman, by the name of Sharlo Malice, who got dead drunk sucking up the dirt. The Iowa Indian above mentioned, lay

drunk in one of the buildings of the fort that stood endwise to the river, when Mrs. Fontenelle deliberately took an axe and knocked his brains out, then jumped some ten feet out of a four-light window, down the bank, and ran home. That night war was expected, but the Iowas showed no fight, cowardly returning home after burying him who received his just fate.

"Mr. Fontenelle was then up at his fort, in the mountains, and Major Pilcher had her taken to the village of the Omahas, who were then living at the Black Bird hills, near where they now dwell. Some two months after Mr. Fontenelle came to Bellevue and sent an escort of Omahas for his wife, to whom he paid about \$1,000 worth of presents for bringing her down."

Logan Fontenelle, the son of Lucien Fontenelle, became chief of the Omahas. He was of medium height, of swarthy complexion black hair and dark piercing eyes. At the time of his death, which occurred while bravely battling against the Sioux, he was thirty years of age. Concerning his death and burial S. D. Bangs' Centennial History of Sarpy County contains the following account:

"In the middle of the summer of 1855 a procession might have been seen wending its way towards the old home of Logan Fontenelle on the bluffs overlooking the Missouri river and above the stone quarries at Bellevue. It moved slowly along, led by Louis San-so-see, who was driving a team with a wagon in which, wrapped in blankets and buffalo robes, was all that was mortal of Logan Fontenelle, the chief of the Omahas. On either side the Indian chiefs and braves mounted on ponies, with the squaws and relatives of the deceased, expressed their grief in mournful outcries. His remains were taken to the house which he had left a short time before, and now, desolate and afflicted, they related the incidents of his death. He had been killed by the Sioux on the Loup Fork thirteen days before, while on a hunt with the Omahas. Having left the main

body with San-so-see in pursuit of game, and while in a ravine that hid them from the sight of the Omahas, they came in contact with a band of Sioux on the war-path, who attacked them. San-so-see escaped in some thick underbrush while Fontenelle stood his ground, fighting desperately and killing three of his adversaries, when he fell, pierced with fourteen arrows, and the prized scalp-lock was taken by his enemies. The Omahas did not recover his body until the next day.

"It was the wish of Col. Sarpy to have him interred on the bluffs, fronting the house in which he had lived, and a coffin was made which proved too small without unfolding the blankets which enveloped him, and as he had been dead so long, this was a disagreeable task. After putting him in the coffin, his wives who witnessed the scene uttered the most piteous cries, cutting their ankles until the blood ran in streams. An old Indian woman who looked like the Witch of Endor, standing between the house and the grave, lifted her arms to Heaven and shrieked her maledictions upon the heads of his murderers. Colonel Sarpy, Stephen Decatur, Mrs. Sloan, an Otoe half breed, and others stood over the grave where his body was being lowered, and while Decatur was reading the impressive funeral service of the Episcopal church, he was interrupted by Mrs. Sloan, who stood by his side and in a loud tone told him that 'a man of his character ought to be ashamed of himself to make a mockery of the Christian religion by reading the solemn services of the church.' He proceeded, however, until the end. After the whites, headed by Col. Sarpy, had paid their last respects, the Indians filed around the grave, and made a few demonstrations of sorrow; the whites dispersing to their homes, and the Indians to relate their own exploits and the daring of their dead chief."

As this chapter is headed "The Indians," we know of no more appropriate place than right here to relate an event that occurred

about 1852, at a place on the military road, about five miles beyond the Elkhorn. It was the actual skinning of a man alive by the Pawnee Indians, and as it is the only act of the kind probably ever performed in this vicinity, it is well worth recording. Gen. Estabrook informs us that he happened to know the man, who was the victim of the Pawnees' wrath. His name was Rhines, a silversmith, who was once a resident of Geneva, Wisconsin, but who shortly previous to his coming west, en route to California, lived at Delavan, in the same State. A man bearing the same name as Gen. Estabrook, of whom he was a distant relative, was one of the party, and wrote back to Wisconsin an account of the horrible affair before Gen. Estabrook ever expected to reside so near the scene of its occurrence.

It appears that Rhines had made a foolish boast, before starting from home, to the effect that he would shoot the first Indian he saw. In due time the party arrived in Nebraska, and camped one evening on the bank of a stream, which at that time was nameless. As the train was about ready to move out the next morning, a small party of young Indians, who had come across the river from the Pawnee village on the opposite side, approached the encampment. These were the first Indians the party had seen, and Rhines was thereupon reminded of his boast. He immediately picked up his rifle, took aim at a young squaw, and shot her dead. The news was carried to the Pawnee village at once, and the party of whites were soon surrounded by the exasperated Indians who demanded and obtained possession of Rhines. After stripping him, they tied him to a wagon wheel, and then commenced to skin him alive. The poor wretch piteously begged of both his own party and the Indians to shoot him and thus end his terrible sufferings, but the remainder of the whites were compelled by the Indians to stand by and witness the torture of their comrade without being able to render him any assistance except at the risk of their own lives. The skinning process was

finally completed, and the unfortunate man survived the operation but a few moments, during which he was cut to pieces by the squaws with their mattocks.

The emigrants were then allowed to move on. Since that day the stream, upon the banks of which this barbarous deed occurred, has been called the Rawhide. This story is known to nearly all the old settlers of Omaha and Nebraska to be an actual fact.

CHAPTER V.

OMAHA'S BIRTH.

PASSAGE OF THE TERRITORIAL ORGANIC ACT—THE SURVEY OF OMAHA—FOURTH OF JULY PICNIC, 1854, ON CAPITOL HILL—THE SIGNIFICATION OF THE NAMES OF OMAHA AND NEBRASKA.

HE bill organizing and admitting Nebraska as a territory soon followed the extinguishment of the Indian title, it being passed by Congress May 23d, 1854, after a fierce and angry struggle, the circumstances of which have not yet been erased from the public mind as this fight was but the forerunner of the efforts soon afterwards made to dis sever the Union, the result being the great civil war.

The time had now come, after the passage of the territorial organic act, for the Ferry Company to lay out their contemplated town. For this purpose they employed A. D. Jones to make the survey of the site, covering the claims of the company. Mr. Jones surveyed it from North Omaha Creek to South Omaha Creek as these small streams are now called. The Omahas had lived along the former, originally named simply Omaha Creek, and the Otoes along the latter, which was formerly called Otoe Creek. The work of surveying occupied the greater portion of June, and the first part of July. Mr. C. H. Downs assisted in the work by carrying the chain and driving the stakes. The city was laid out in 322 blocks, each being 264 feet square; the streets 100 feet wide, except Cap-

itol Avenue, which was made 120 feet wide, but which was given no alley in the blocks on each side of it. The lots were staked out 66 by 132 feet, with the exception of business lots which were made only 22 feet wide. Two squares were reserved—Jefferson Square, 264 by 280 feet, and Capitol Square, on Capitol Hill, 600 feet square. A park of seven blocks, bounded by Eighth and Ninth, and Jackson and Davenport streets, was laid out, but was afterwards given up to business purposes, being now occupied by the Union Pacific Headquarters, Wyoming Hotel, the Cozzens House, and other buildings.

During the latter part of the survey, the 4th of July, 1854, was celebrated by a picnic on Capitol Hill by a quite a party of excursionists from Council Bluffs, among whom were several persons who soon afterwards located in Omaha—Hadley D. Johnson, A. D. Jones and wife, A. J. Hanscom and wife, William D. Brown and wife, Harrison Johnson, Mr. Seely and wife, Thomas Davis and wife and children, Fred. Davis and his sister, who is now Mrs. Herman Kountze, and several others. Addresses were made by Hadley D. Johnson, A. D. Jones and one or two others. It has been handed down to posterity that a general good time, as the phrase goes, was had by everybody, and the event still lingers in the memory of those who participated.

The map of the survey was lithographed in St. Louis, and one of the original copies is now in the possession of Byron Reed. In one corner is the following note: "Lots will be given away to persons who will improve them—private sale will be made on the premises. A newspaper, the Omaha Arrow, is published weekly at this place; a brick building, suitable for the Territorial Legislature, is in process of construction, and a steam mill and brick hotel will be completed in a few weeks." Dated, September 1st, 1854.

Omaha was the name given to the new town!

Gen. Estabrook is our authority for saying that it was probably

adopted by the Ferry Company simply because it was pretty and was borne by the nearest tribe of Indians in the vicinity, the Mahas. It is said by some that the honor of suggesting the adoption of the name belongs to Jesse Lowe, now dead, while others claim that to J. E. Johnson, then of Kanesville, is due the credit of naming the town. Aside from its prettiness it has a meaning full of significance—"Above all others upon a stream!"

Mr. A. D. Jones, when secretary of the Omaha Old Settlers' Association, now extinct, wrote in 1868 to the Rev. William Hamilton, who was the first missionary in Nebraska, inquiring as to the origin and meaning of the word Omaha. Mr. Hamilton says in his reply, dated Omaha Mission, March 4, 1868: "The Omahas encamped above on the stream, E-ro-ma-ha, contracted into O-ma-ha, which means 'above' with reference to a stream, or, 'above on a stream.' To understand the word, I must add that they have three words translated 'above.' Mangre, with reference to height, air; Amer-e-ta, with reference to a country bordering on or near a stream; E-ro-ma-ha, with reference to where your position is."

Hence the natural inference is that Omaha is "E-ro-ma-ha—above all others upon a stream."

"And so we were," said Gen. Estabrook, in his Centennial historical address on the Fourth of July, 1876, "and so we have been from that day to this, and so we are now, above all other towns in importance, on the stream, and so, aided by the same good genius, we shall ever remain."

In this connection it will not be out of place to give the meaning of the name Nebraska. The Platte river was also called Nebraska, which is an Indian word signifying *Ne*, water, and *braska*, wide or shallow. So we have "shallow-water" as the meaning, which is very appropriate as applied to the river referred to, and from which the Territory took its name.

CHAPTER VI.

FIRST INCIDENTS.

THE FIRST BRICK-YARD—COMMENCEMENT OF THE STATE HOUSE—
 FIRST ACTUAL SETTLERS—FIRST BUILDING, THE "CLAIM HOUSE"—
 FIRST PREACHER AND FIRST RELIGIOUS SERVICES—FIRST SAW-
 MILL—FIRST HALF-DOZEN HOUSES—FIRST DANCE—FIRST WHITE
 CHILD—FIRST MARRIAGE—FIRST GRAVE—FIRST WHITE BURIAL—
 FIRST CASE OF DELIRIUM TREMENS—FIRST PHYSICIAN—FIRST
 LAWYERS—FIRST STEAM FERRY BOAT—FIRST DRY GOODS STORE.



HAVING laid out the town site of Omaha, the Ferry Company's next move was to give it the other important features of a town, namely, people and buildings. They induced Benjamin Winchester, of Kanesville or Council Bluffs, to start a brick-yard—which was the first on this side of the river—for the purpose of supplying the brick for the already contemplated building of the State House, for the Ferry Company felt pretty confident, even then, of having their embryo city designated by the first territorial legislature, as the capital of Nebraska, and they did not go amiss, as, after events proved.

Winchester, being overcome by misfortunes, was not able to carry on his contract, and soon sold his yard to the Ferry Company, who were afterwards obliged to obtain the necessary brick for the State House from Kanesville, from which place they were hauled by Harrison Johnson, who is now a prominent citizen and an honest granger in this county.

It was on the morning of the 11th of July, 1854, that Mr. and Mrs. Newell came over from Kanesville. Mr. Newell had been engaged to work in the brick-yard, and his wife to cook for the laborers. William P. Snowden and wife followed them over in the afternoon of the same day. Both parties crossed the Missouri river on William D. Brown's flat-boat ferry, a fact that both Mr. and Mrs. Snowden distinctly remember, as the steam ferry boat had not then begun running.

Mr. and Mrs. Newell remained only three weeks, which left to Mr. and Mrs. Snowden the honor of being the first actual settlers in Omaha, a fact that no one can deny. They had come to stay, and stay they did, even unto this day, being both honored and respected citizens and the parents of a large family of children.

Let it be borne in mind by the reader, that previous to the arrival of the above mentioned persons, there had been no one living here at all, although there were many who had claims staked out.

Cam. Reeves and family came next, then P. G. Peterson, and then others followed rapidly. Many of our old settlers, however did not locate permanently at Omaha till late in the fall of 1855, and many did not come till 1856 and 1857. Although they had been on the ground before, more or less frequently, they had lived at Kanesville in the meantime. Some, who are nevertheless considered old settlers, did not come till after the above dates.

The Ferry Company built the first house in Omaha. It was a rude log structure, and was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Snowden, who kept it as a sort of hotel or boarding house during that summer and fall, more especially for the employes of the company. It was located on Twelfth and Jackson streets, and was called by the high sounding name of the St. Nicholas, but was better known as the "Claim House." Besides being the first house, this was the first hotel in Omaha.

The first religious services in Omaha were held at the St. Nicholas hotel, the residence of Mr. Snowden, at whose solicitation the Rev. Mr. Cooper came over from Council Bluffs to preach. He was a Methodist preacher, and hence that church can justly claim the honor of being the first religious organization represented on the ground. The first services were held Sunday, August 13th, 1854. There was a small but appreciative congregation, there being not over twenty-five persons in attendance, and they mostly resided at Council Bluffs, intending, however, to remove to Omaha in a short time. Among those present were Mr. and Mrs. Snowden, A. D. Jones, who led the singing, Mr. Leonard and wife, and "Aleck" Davis and daughter, the latter two gentlemen being brothers-in-law of Samuel Bayliss, of Council Bluffs.

Rev. Mr. Cooper labored in the vineyard of the Lord on Sundays, and worked in Mr. Jones' stone quarry, now owned by John Green, on week days, having obtained permission to open it, and the stone was used in the foundation of the Western Exchange building, now occupied by Caldwell, Hamilton & Co.'s bank.

Mr. Davis, in company with Mr. Bayliss, built and owned the first saw-mill, which was located in the vicinity of where John Green's flour mill now stands. Mr. Thomas Davis, the father of Fred. Davis of this city, afterwards became the owner of this mill.

The second house in Omaha was built by Mr. Gaylord, at Burt and Twenty-second streets; the third was the "Big 6," a sod-house or "dug-out," which was occupied as a grocery and saloon by Lewis and Clancy, north side of Chicago, between Thirteenth and Fourteenth streets.

The fourth house was the log dwelling erected by Mr. Snowden, on the west side of Tenth street, just south of Thiele's garden, the brick house of Mr. Crowell now covering the spot. The lot was given to Mr. Snowden by the Ferry Company on condition that he would

build on it. It was the first private dwelling house that was completed, and Mr. and Mrs. Snowden moved into it after having kept the St. Nicholas for three months. The pioneers had a grand house-warming there, tripping the light fantastic toe with more grace and agility than they do now, and some of them have not yet forgotten their fancy steps or how to cut the "pigeon's wing." The first dance was at the house-warming held in this house, under the auspices of Mr. and Mrs. Snowden.

Quilts and aprons answered the purposes of doors and windows, and for seats they had rough boards. It was a very primitive affair. Quite a goodly number of persons assembled to join in the festive dance.

Among those in attendance besides Mr. and Mrs. Snowden, were A. D. Jones, Ed. Burdell, who afterwards built the "City Hotel," at the south-west corner of Eleventh and Harney streets, Alex. Davis and daughters, and Mr. Leonard and wife. Mr. Leonard, who was an amateur fiddler, furnished the music for the occasion and did the "calling off." The ball opened with the "French Four," a popular figure in those days, and it was led by Mr. Snowden and Mr. Jones, and all went merry as a marriage bell, there being no sleep till morn.

Mr. and Mrs. Snowden lived in this house for two years, and the building was standing up to 1870. The Ferry Company had offered a lot to the first lady who settled in their new town, and Mrs. Snowden in due time secured the prize, and afterwards disposed of it.

The next house put up was built by P. G. Peterson, on the west side of Tenth street, between Farnham and Harney. It stands there yet, and is occupied as a laundry by some colored people.

The sixth house was erected by Samuel E. and William Rogers, south side of Douglas, between Tenth and Eleventh streets.

The old State House on Ninth, between Farnham and Douglas, was the first brick structure. Other buildings followed, and many of the old landmarks remain, to which we shall refer in another chapter.

The first white child born in Omaha was Miss Margaret Ferry, who came into the world in the month of October, 1854. She was the daughter of James Ferry, who laid the first stone for the foundation of the old State House.

It is claimed by some, however, that the honor of being the first white child born in Omaha belongs to William Nebraska Reeves. He was born in that portion of the city known as Park Wild—Herman Kountze's place—and which spot is still indicated by Park Wild avenue. Reeves is now a young man and lives with his mother out on the Elkhorn.

The first marriage was that of John Logan to Miss Caroline Mosier. Mr. and Mrs. Logan still reside in Omaha, at present at the northeast corner of Fourteenth street and Capitol avenue,

The first grave in Omaha was dug by William P. Snowden, where Turner Hall now stands, for the remains of an old Otoe squaw, who had been abandoned to die by the roadside. How appropriate are the words of Whittier:

" Behind the scared squaw's birch canoe
The steamer smokes and raves ;
And city lots are staked for sale
Above old Indian graves."

The first burial among the whites was that of Mr. M. C. Gaylord's child, at a spot on Capitol Hill some little distance north-west of where the High School building now stands,

The first case of *delirium tremens* was that of Mr. Todd, who erected in the vicinity of the St. Nicholas the first frame house or rather shanty, and stocked it with groceries, "dry and wet," principally the latter, whisky being his chief article of trade. Todd used to say, in

a rather pompous style, that he "went East" for his goods—and so he did, for he purchased them in Council Bluffs. He was his own best customer, and he drank so much of his own whisky, that his nose soon became as red as the red flag that he hung out for a sign. He drank early and often and late. The "ardent" soon got the better of him, and gave him the "shakes" so fearfully that it shook the life out of him so that one day he had to lie down and die. He was buried near where the Union Pacific track crosses Thirteenth street. To him belongs the honor of being the first drunkard in Omaha, as well as the first man who died here—and his memory is entitled to some respect as he exhibited some decency in ceasing to exist under the circumstances. The following obituary poetry was written by George W. Childs, of the Philadelphia *Ledger*, at our special request in a letter to him stating the circumstances, and that we wanted something in his best style to honor the memory of Mr. Todd in this history:

"Poor old Mr. Todd,—he
Loved too well his "toddy;"
'Twas the intoxicating cup
That made him turn his toes up;
'Tis sad to think
He died of drink
And was buried 'neath the sod,
Gone to meet his God."

Dr. George L. Miller was the first physician. He came here in the fall of 1854, from Syracuse, N. Y., accompanied by his father, Col. Lorin Miller. Dr. Miller's first patient was an Omaha Indian papoose, and it is said that the child died.

The Doctor upon being summoned to attend the case, answered the call with alacrity, being guided to the camp on the bottoms by the redskin who had been sent for that purpose. The Doctor gives his reminiscence of the affair as follows: "Exactly how the afore-said brave jumped from the path and disappeared in the grass without

a word of explanation, not even so much as a grunt; how moments seemed hours that we stood, speechless and motionless, 'each particular hair' sadly agitated at the roots, waiting for his return, or for death, or for whatever else might come; how he did return, and with the wave of the hand beckoned us to follow on among the wigwams, and how we followed accordingly, not daring to run, until we reached the right one; how Mr. Indian shot through the triangular door, like the arrow from the bow—and how diligently the medicine-man struggled to get through the little opening, by main strength and awkwardness, and finally did it; precisely how powerful was the sense of relief from ugly, creeping sensations around the head and throat, when a unanimous grunt from two squaws and the three Indians gave him welcome, with smiles, to a cushion on the ground, as a seat of state; how the inevitable pipe and kinnikinick was passed from the mouths of the aforesaid Indians (who had just dined on dog-soup,) to our own; and how sweet was the taste of friendship through its fumes, we cannot stop to particularize. It was the case of a young physician, just out of city-life, practicing among the Indians for the first time."

A. J. Poppleton and O. D. Richardson were the first practicing lawyers, and they both took an active part in making the first laws of the Territory, as they were members of the first legislature, in which they did good work for Omaha. Gov. Richardson arrived here in October, 1854, and was soon followed by Mr. Poppleton, both coming from about the same vicinity in Michigan. They roomed together during the first winter in Omaha, and therefore have been called the first law firm. A. D. Jones, who was a little of everything in those days, was also a lawyer, and was here before either of the above gentlemen, but as we understand the matter, he was a lawyer more in name than in practice.

The first steam ferry boat put in operation here by the Ferry

Company was the "Gen. Marion," which they had purchased at Alton, Illinois, and which superseded Brown's flat-boat ferry. It was not until late in the fall of 1854, that it began running. It was "of ample power and dimensions to clear the track from day to day" as we learn from an old newspaper advertisement.

The first dry goods store in Omaha was that of Tootle & Jackson; among the other general stores that followed were those of James Megeath and John R. Porter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ARROW.

THE FIRST OMAHA NEWSPAPER—THE PROCESS OF MAKING A WESTERN TOWN—THE FIRST EDITOR—HIS ROMANTIC MARRIAGE—HIS SANCTUM—ILLUSTRATION—HIS DREAMY PREDICTION: "A NIGHT IN OUR SANCTUM." &c., &c.



AMONG the institutions that aided greatly to give Omaha a more than local notoriety in her infancy, was the Omaha *Arrow*, the first newspaper published here, the first number of which is dated July 28, 1854, soon after the survey had been completed. It was a four page, six column sheet, the columns being rather wide, and we are informed in a line immediately under the head, that it was "a family newspaper, devoted to the arts, sciences, general literature, agriculture, and politics;" its politics being Democratic. It took in a wide field certainly, and if these general features are any criterion the *Arrow* was a paper that circulated among people of social refinement and literary culture even at that early day.

The *Arrow* was printed at Council Bluffs at the office of the *Bugle*, probably with the same type, and hence we find a large number of Council Bluffs items and advertisements in it. It was distributed to the few persons in Omaha on the day of its publication, and sent abroad as an advertisement of the place. We notice that it is dated "Omaha City," which reminds us, in this connection, of

a paragraph in Hon. J. M. Woolworth's volume, "Nebraska in 1857." He says: "The process of making a town, and forming a company is very simple. Three, four, or half-a-dozen men form a company, claim a tract of vacant land, whenever they can find it, give the spot some name with 'city' attached to it, as a tail, fill up one, two, three hundred, or any number of certificates of stock, and then enter upon their traffic in them. This forms a fancy stock which is worthy of Wall Street itself. Not that there are not towns gotten up in this way, which will have merit. How true is this of Omaha City, and Bellevue and Nebraska City and many other towns, where lots are of great value, and of towns like Omaha, whose stock is yet in market. We speak of these towns, called 'kiting' towns, and which out here, where land is abundant, answer the same purpose as the coal companies of New York."

So it is with nearly all new western towns. In their infancy they fly "their kite," to which is attached the word "city" as a tail; but when they grow to some size and importance, when they can speak for themselves, they cut off the tail. Omaha retained her tail even up to 1857, and probably a year or two later.

But let us return from our little digression to the subject in hand, the *Arrow*. J. E. Johnson and J. W. Pattison were the editors and proprietors. Johnson was the business man of the concern. He was a Mormon and had three or four wives. He lived in Council Bluffs and was engaged in several kinds of business at the same time. He practiced law, ran a blacksmith shop, was an insurance agent, and carried on a general merchandizing business, by all of which he was enabled to support his three or four wives and their poor relations. He was a lively man on general principles. He left this part of the country in 1856, and went to Salt Lake, where he now resides.

Pattison remained in Omaha for some two or three years, and

then disappeared from the scene. He was married to a Miss Henrietta Redner, and the marriage took place during a heavy rainstorm under a large tree on the Elkhorn, the Rev. Silas J. Francis tying the knot. Another couple, Frank Fox and Harriet Whittier, were married at the same time and place. This programme was in accordance with the ideas of the romantic Pattison, but the double wedding was not quite so romantic an affair as it might have been had it been all sunshine instead of clouds and soaking rain. The last heard of Pattison was that he was editing a paper somewhere in Missouri.

There were only twelve numbers of the *Arrow* published, covering the period from July 28th to November 10th, 1854, which shows that it occasionally skipped a week, probably when the supply of paper ran out, which is not an unusual occurrence in a pioneer printing office. Mr. Byron Reed has in his possession the whole series, with the exception of No. 6. He purchased them of a gentleman now residing in Salt Lake, formerly living in Omaha, paying the high price of \$30 for them. He has had them bound into a volume, and prizes them very highly as being among his most rare and valuable historical records. He has allowed us free access to them, and we have thus been enabled to obtain a great deal of interesting history.

The first number of the *Arrow* contains on the first page a portion of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, which is concluded in the second issue. Turning to the editorial page we find the motto, "The people—the sovereigns of the soil," at the head of the column.

Pattison, who was the real editor of the *Arrow*, was a lawyer and general business agent. His card in the *Arrow* informs us that he was located at Omaha, but the fact is that he then lived at Council Bluffs. We have every reason to suppose that his practice did not in the least interfere with his editorial duties, to perform which he

evidently had ample time. He was a vivid and entertaining writer, as some of his articles in the *Arrow* prove.

Pattison was a fanciful writer, as will be seen by his salutatory editorial, as follows:

"Well, strangers, friends, patrons, and the good people generally, wherever in the wide world your lot may be cast, and in whatever clime this *Arrow* may reach you, here we are upon Nebraska soil seated upon the stump of an ancient oak, which serves for an editorial chair, and the top of our badly abused beaver for a table, we purpose editing a leader for the Omaha *Arrow*.

"An elevated table land surrounds us; the majestic Missouri just off on our left goes sweeping its muddy course adown towards the Mexican Gulf, whilst the background of the pleasing picture is filled up with Iowa's loveliest, richest scenery. Away upon our



THE FIRST OMAHA EDITOR AND HIS
SANCTUM.

left, spreading far away in the distance lies one of the loveliest sections of Nebraska. Yon rich, rolling, wide-spread and beautiful prairie dotted with timber looks lovely enough just now as heaven's free sun-light touches off in beauty the lights and shades to be literally entitled the Eden land of the world, and inspire us with flights of fancy upon this antiquated beaver, but it won't pay. There sticks our axé in the trunk of an old oak, whose branches have for years

been fanned by the breezes that constantly sweep from over the oft-times flower-dotted prairie-lea, and from which we purpose making a log for our cabin claim."

Pattison's editorial, "A Night in our Sanctum," is a well written article, and is well worth reproducing, in order to show by way of comparison how truly the predictions concerning Omaha in his "dream" have been fulfilled. The article is as follows:

"A NIGHT IN OUR SANCTUM.—Last night we slept in our sanctum—the starry decked heaven for a ceiling, and Mother Earth for a flooring. It was a glorious night and we were tired from the day's exertions. Far away on different portions of the prairie glimmered the camp fires of our neighbors, the Pawnees, Omahas or that noble and too often unappreciated class of our own people known as pioneers or squatters. We gathered around our little camp fire, talked of times of the past, of the pleasing present, and of the glorious future which the march of civilization would open in the land whereon we sat. The new moon was just sinking behind the distant prairie roll, but slightly dispelling the darkness which crept over our loved and cherished Nebraska land. We thought of distant friends and loved ones who stretched upon beds of downy ease little appreciated the unalloyed pleasure, the heaven-blessed comfort, that dwelt with us in this far-off land. No busy hum of the bustling world served to distract our thoughts. Behind us was spread our buffalo robe in an old Indian trail which was to serve as our bed and bedding. The cool night wind swept in cooling breezes around us, deep laden with the perfume of a thousand-hued and varied flowers. Far away upon our lea came the occasional howl of the prairie wolves. Talk of comfort; there was more of it in one hour of our sanctum camp life and of camp life generally upon Nebraska soil, than in a whole life of fashionable, pampered world in the settlements, and individually we would not have exchanged

our sanctum for any of those of our brethren of the press who boast of its neatness and beauty of artful adornment.

"The night stole on and we in the most comfortable manner in the world—and editors have a faculty of making themselves comfortable together—crept between art and nature—our blanket and buffalo, to sleep and perchance to dream, 'of battles, sieges, fortunes and perils, the imminent breach.' To dreamland we went. The busy hum of business from factories and the varied branches of mechanism from Omaha city reached our ears. The incessant rattle of innumerable drays over the paved streets, the steady tramp of ten thousand of an animated, enterprising population, the hoarse orders fast issued from the crowd of steamers upon the levee loading with the rich products of the State of Nebraska and unloading the fruits, species and products of other climes and soils greeted our ears. Far away from toward the setting sun came telegraphic dispatches of improvements, progress and moral advancement upon the Pacific coast. Cars full freighted with teas, silks, &c., were arriving from thence and passing across the stationary channel of the Missouri river with lightning speed hurrying on to the Atlantic seaboard. The third express train on the Council Bluffs and Galveston R. R. came thundering close by us with a shrill whistle that brought us to our feet knife in hand. We rubbed our eyes, looked into the darkness beyond to see the flying train. They had vanished and the shrill second neigh of our lariat-ed horses gave indication of the danger near. The hum of business, in and around the city, had also vanished and the same rude camp fires were before us. We slept again and daylight stole upon us refreshed and ready for another day's labor."

Pattison's dreamy predictions have been more than fulfilled in the building and completion of the great trans - continental railroad, the Union and Central Pacific, and half a dozen or more other lines;

and in the rapid growth of Omaha to an important and beautiful city and commercial metropolis of 25,000 inhabitants.

CHAPTER VIII.

OMAHA'S PROGRESS—ITEMS FROM THE ARROW.

THE NEWSPAPER AS A HISTORIAN—DEMANDS OF THE INDIANS—SULPHUR SPRINGS—THE "BIG 6"—COUNCIL BLUFFS AND OMAHA STAGE—POSTMASTER JONES AND HIS HAT—ILLUSTRATION—DISTINGUISHED ARRIVALS, GOV. HURT AND SECRETARY CUMING—DEATH OF THE FORMER—ARRIVAL OF BIRD B. CHAPMAN AND DR. MILLER.



It is a fact that the best historian of the events of any particular period in these modern days is the newspaper—it is the most faithful chronicler of daily occurrences—and therefore no apology is needed for our frequent reference to the *Arrow* as authority, nor for the reproduction of interesting items from its local columns, showing the progress of the town during the publication of the paper in the summer of 1854.

Among other interesting items which are found in the first number of the *Arrow*, July 28, 1854, is the following:

"DELEGATE TO CONGRESS—It is expected that H. D. Johnson and Major Gatewood will be the two opposing candidates for delegates to Congress."

But the coming man proved to be Bird B. Chapman, who came all the way from Ohio to be elected as Nebraska's first delegate to Congress.

"The Indians," says the *Arrow*, "require \$10 from each settler for the right to build and make improvements upon the lands for which

they have not yet received payment nor relinquished their rights. We consider this a just demand, and for ourselves have complied. The amount should be paid only to Logan Fontenelle (the chief), H. D. Johnson, or ourselves."

The survey of Omaha City, as made by A. D. Jones, is noticed at considerable length. A. D. Jones was a lawyer as well as a surveyor, and we find his "shingle," in the shape of a card, hung out among the advertisements in the *Arrow*. He was not, however, regularly admitted to the Nebraska bar until there was a bar to be admitted to, which was not till some time afterwards, when he got his certificate on motion of Gen. Estabrook, who did a great deal of such motioning in those days. However, we apprehend that Mr. Jones was never called to account for practicing without a certificate of admission, as there was not so much "red tape" then as there is now.

In the second number of the *Arrow* we find the editor "again seated upon the green sward, 'neath the tent of his friend W. Clancy, whose hospitality he is enjoying, with an inverted nail keg for a table, and feeling as comfortable as if seated upon a soft cushioned sofa, with all the comforts of a fashionable life surrounding him." Pattison, it seems, could easily accommodate himself to circumstances.

Rev. Peter Cooper is announced to preach at the residence of Mr. Snowden on Sunday, the 13th inst., [July] at 2 o'clock, P. M., to which the citizens of Bluff City are respectfully invited to attend.

James A. Jackson advertises for "bids to be received until the 15th of August, for furnishing 175 perch of stone for foundation to be delivered in Omaha, the quarry being about one mile from the place of delivery."

The *Arrow* of September 1st, 1854, in its "leader" on Omaha City, says that it will be and deserves to be the future capital of Nebraska, as a Territory and State.

Even at that early day Sulphur Springs had been discovered, and was visited by the "old settlers" then as frequently as it is now by the citizens of Omaha, and its water was imbibed with an appreciable relish, as we should infer from the *Arrow's* notice of it.

A fair idea of the activity and progress of Omaha, at this particular period, may be obtained from the following extract from the *Arrow* of Sept. 8th, 1854: "The sound of axe, hammer and other tools are daily heard in and around this eligible city site. Two stores both doing a good business, are in successful operation, and in a few weeks one of the best steam saw-mills in the west will be in full blast by us here. In connection therewith, the enterprising company purpose starting a good flouring mill; the engine ordered for the saw mill will be of sufficient power for both. A good substantial hotel will soon be ready for the reception of visitors and boarders. The work on the other prominent buildings is progressing rapidly. It really does one's heart good to see the young American progress and go-aheaditiveness which characterize Omaha City."

The same paper informs us that "Mr. J. A. Jackson will in a few days be in reception of a large amount of good lumber for building purposes;" also, "some ten or twelve buildings are going up in Omaha City next week. Hurrah! for the march of civilization is playing wild with this glorious country. But we need mechanics prodigiously to push along with railroad speed," says the sanguine and enthusiastic editor, who in another place goes into ecstasies over Mr. Winchester's brick. He had seen a good many brick in his day, but none better than those manufactured by Winchester.

"Our friends, the Omahas," says the *Arrow*, "express a willingness to be removed to their new hunting ground and we sincerely trust steps will be immediately taken to secure the much-desired object."

T. Jefferys & Co. announce that their "steam saw-mill, two and a half miles from the city, on the bottom, is now in successful operation."

William Clancy, in a card, respectfully informs the settlers in and around Omaha City, that he is prepared at the sign of the "Big 6," near the spring, to accommodate them with any article, provisions, &c.—we suppose the "&c." meant liquid refreshments—at as reasonable rates as may be secured elsewhere, and as a special inducement he adds that "a good fresh drink of sulphur water, from his celebrated spring, can at all times be obtained there." We suppose the sulphur water was bottled and brought down from the spring, as the "Big 6" was located on the north side of Chicago, between Thirteenth and Fourteenth streets, and was a popular resort for the pioneers of Omaha who met there to discuss matters of public importance and interest, to hold public meetings, and to sample Mr. Clancy's liquids, especially the sulphur water. It is said that the sulphur water in those days was so strong that it had to be diluted with "fire-water," as the Indians called it, but better known among the whites as Bourbon, or rye, or plain corn-juice. They generally drank the "fire-water" first, and the sulphur water afterwards, thus allowing the process of dilution to take place after the liquids had reached the receptacle commonly called the stomach. And it is a fact that a few of the citizens of Omaha follow this practice even unto this modern day. Such, alas! is the force of example.

The *Arrow* of September 22d notices the arrival of "W. N. Byers, formerly of Muscatine, Iowa. He is an old stager on the Oregon frontier and brings with him one of the best solar compasses for field surveying in the West. He purposes making our soil his home."

In 1856 or 1857 we find Mr. Byers associated with Hon. A. J.

Poppleton as a lawyer, the firm being Poppleton & Byers. It was in 1859, during the Pike's Peak excitement, that Mr. Byers departed for Colorado. Mr. Poppleton still resides in Omaha, and is one of the ablest lawyers in the country.

From the *Arrow* of September 29th we learn that M. W. Robinson had put on a tri-weekly line of stages between Council Bluffs and Omaha; and we are informed "that persons may receive the Omaha City mail matter for the present from the P. M., A. D. Jones, at Mr. Clancy's provision establishment every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday evenings, shortly after the arrival of the Council Bluffs and Omaha City stage."



POSTMASTER JONES WITH HIS HAT FOR A POST-OFFICE.

Mr. Jones, our first postmaster, be it remembered, used to carry the mail in his hat, and was a sort of walking post-office. He was liable to be stopped at any moment by some person inquiring

for a letter, and then off would come his capacious stove-pipe, and he would examine the letters contained therein.

Mr. Jones often reverts to this fact with a great deal of pleasure, especially when he compares the stove-pipe post-office of 1854 with the magnificent four-story stone edifice, costing about \$400,000, that now stands at the southwest corner of Dodge and Fifteenth streets, and which was completed about two years ago.*

"The new and excellent steam saw-mill of Mr. Samuel S. Bayliss & Co., will be in operation in a very short time near the city site," says the *Arrow* of this date; also, that "the foundation of the new State House will be completed in a few days;" and that the "new brick hotel will also be finished as fast as brick can be put together.—Other buildings are progressing finely.—Some two or three fine brick houses will ere long be started upon the site."

The *Arrow* of October 6th contains a full report of the citizens' meeting at the "Big 6," September 20th, to prepare a reception for Gov. Burt, and just beneath this report, it has the following personal item :

"DISTINGUISHED ARRIVAL.—We stop the press to announce the arrival of the Hon. Secretary. Mr. T. B. Cuming arrived to-day. His Excellency, Gov. Burt, is also expected to arrive to-day."

The next number, October 13, says : "His Excellency, F. H. Burt, Governor of Nebraska, reached Bellevue on the 6th inst., in a feeble condition, and since that time has been under careful medical treatment," and in the same item the paper announces the postponement of the contemplated reception at Omaha.

The next number, October 20, is draped in mourning for the

* Hon. A. J. Poppleton, in his speech December 3d, 1863, at the breaking of the ground for the Union Pacific, referred, by way of comparison as to Omaha's growth, to the time when A. D. Jones used to carry the post-office in his hat. Mr. Poppleton thus first gave the fact a notoriety which has increased with the progress of the city since that date.

death of Gov. Burt, and contains a long obituary article and resolutions, both of which had appeared in an extra on Wednesday, October 18th, the day on which the sad event occurred.

The following item from this number will interest our Methodist readers :

"M. E. CHURCH IN OMAHA CITY.—In the late session of the Iowa Conference, a new district known as the Nebraska and Kansas Missionary District was established, at present under the Presiding Eldership of Rev. M. F. Shinn, of Council Bluff City, Iowa. The stations are as follows : Omaha City, Old Ft. Kearney, Waukaressa and Ft. Leavenworth."

Two proclamations by Acting-Governor Cuming are also found in the *Arrow* of this date—the first being in respect to the Governor's death, and the second ordering the taking of the census, &c.

The *Arrow* of November 3d announces the arrival of B. B. Chapman thus : "A few days since with pleasure we met with B. B. Chapman, Esq., from Lorian county, Ohio. A staunch Democrat of the right stamp, and one in whom the administration has placed implicit confidence. His talent, energy and gentlemanly deportment will make him *scarce* of friends, &c."

Whether the gentleman considered this a complimentary notice or not, this historian has not been able to ascertain. But we imagine that he felt like making that editor very *scarce* about that time for not having seen the error and corrected it by putting in the word "scores."

Notice is made of the sale of the "Big 6" by Mr. Clancy to Mr. Goodwill, "lately from New York."

The arrival of Dr. G. L. Miller, Omaha's first physician, is mentioned in this number as follows : "We were agreeably surprised to see the sign of Dr. G. L. Miller hanging out at Mr. E. Buddel's residence, in this place a few days since. Although but little sick-

ness pervades our prairie land, we can but congratulate our citizens upon the acquisition of a young and apparently well qualified physician to our society. He comes kindly recommended from his late practice in the city of Syracuse, N. Y."

"The work on the State House goes on briskly," says the *Arrow*, "and but a few days more will elapse ere the entire wall and roof will be completed. It will be ready for the accommodation of the body for which it was intended, before the middle of next month."

"The large brick hotel commenced here a short time ago by Jesse Lowe, Esq., will now go rapidly on to completion," says the *Arrow*.

The *Arrow* of November 10th asks, in a long editorial, "who will be appointed Governor of Nebraska?" It also notices the departure of Marshal Izard for his family in Arkansas, and thinks he would make a good successor to Governor Burt.

The *Arrow* is assured by Mr. Davis, the contractor, that the State House will be ready December 1st, and in the same connection says, "Our friend, J. M. Thayer, is erecting a neat dwelling near by, and to the society of Omaha City his agreeable family will shortly be a pleasant addition. Friend Parker is putting up an excellent house for his family, and a host of others are doing likewise."

The Fontenelle House receives a good notice: "This is the name of the large and beautiful brick hotel, now in process of erection at this place. It is appropriately named after the head chief of the Omaha Indian tribe, whose hunting grounds, by purchase on the part of the United States, we now occupy, and after whose tribe this prosperous place is named."

"We hope to lay before our readers in the next number of the *Arrow*," says the editor, "the full census returns of the Territory, also the arrangements of the districts and the amount of representation to which each is entitled."

But the next number never appeared ; for what reason this historian knows not. The *Nebraskan* succeeded it and was run in the interest of Bird B. Chapman, who was elected as Nebraska's first delegate to Congress.

CHAPTER IX.

OMAHA WINS THE CAPITAL PRIZE.

FIRST TERRITORIAL OFFICERS—ARRIVAL OF GOVERNOR BURT AND SECRETARY CUMING—DEATH OF GOVERNOR BURT—CUMING BECOMES ACTING-GOVERNOR—HE CALLS AN ELECTION AND DESIGNATES OMAHA AS THE PLACE FOR HOLDING THE FIRST LEGISLATURE—THE CAPITAL FIGHT—OMAHA VICTORIOUS—SCENES AND INCIDENTS OF THE SESSION—THE MEN WHO COMPOSED THE LEGISLATURE—TOUGH STORIES—"SCRIP-TOWN"—A JOKE ON A "SHARP"—JAMES C. MITCHELL LOCATES THE CAPITOL BUILDING—AN INDIGNATION MEETING AT GLENWOOD, IOWA—OMAHA'S CHAMPIONS—WILD-CAT BANKS—A JOKE ON JONES—IZARD BECOMES GOVERNOR—ARRIVAL OF U. S. ATTORNEY ESTABROOK.



FRANCIS H. BURT, of South Carolina, was the first Territorial Governor of Nebraska, he having been appointed in the place of William O. Butler, who had declined the honor. The other first territorial officers were: Thomas B. Cuming, of Iowa, Secretary; Fenner Ferguson, of Michigan, Chief Justice; James Bradley, of Indiana, and Edward R. Hardin, of Georgia, Associate Justices; Mark W. Izard, of Arkansas, Marshal; and Experience Estabrook, of Wisconsin, Attorney.

It was on the 6th day of October, 1854, that Governor Burt and Secretary Cuming arrived in the territory and stopped at Bellevue. The other territorial officers came at different times during the following few months.

A grand reception had been arranged at Omaha for the Governor and Secretary. The committee of reception was composed of Charles B. Smith, A. D. Jones, W. R. Rogers, R. B. Whitted, Michael Murphy, Wm. Clancy, S. A. Lewis, C. H. Downs, Wm. N. Byers, and Wm. Right; and the committee of arrangements consisted of T. Allen, C. B. Smith, David Lindley, Alex. Davis and C. H. Downs.

But the reception never came off, owing to the illness and death of Governor Burt. He came here in poor health, and continued to fail rapidly until on the morning of Wednesday, October 18th, 1854, at half-past three o'clock, he died at the old Presbyterian Mission House at Bellevue, of which the Rev. William J. Hamilton was the missionary in charge. The sad event cast a deep gloom over the entire territory.

Governor Burt was a native of Pendleton, South Carolina, and was about 45 years of age. He left a wife, two sons and four daughters.

His remains were sent back to South Carolina, being accompanied thither by his son, Armsted Burt, and an escort of four pall-bearers.

Secretary Cuming, by virtue of his office, became Governor, and at once took hold of the executive reins. His first act was to issue a proclamation in reference to the death of Governor Burt, ordering that the national colors be draped in mourning, and that the territorial officers wear crape upon the left arm for thirty days.

His second act was the issuance of a proclamation on the 21st day of October, 1854, for a census or an enumeration of the inhabitants of the Territory, to commence October 24th, 1854, under officers instructed to complete the same, as nearly as possible, within four weeks, after which notices were to be distributed for the election

of a delegate to Congress, and of a territorial legislature to convene that winter.

The object of the proclamation was to give notice to persons who had removed temporarily from the Territory, to return in time for the census, as "in no case would names be enrolled except of actual and permanent residents of the Territory."

Governor Cuming next issued a proclamation, November 31st, for an election, which took place December 12th.

It was the duty of the Governor to convene the legislature at some point of his own selection, and the first legislature was to fix the location of the capital. He designated Omaha as the place for the holding of the first legislature, notwithstanding the opposition of the representatives of other points, all of whom were straining every nerve and using every means to induce him to designate their own favorite town. A deep resentment towards the Governor on the part of the disappointed applicants was the natural consequence.

The legislature met at Omaha on the 16th of January, 1854, in the State House, which had been built by the Ferry Company in anticipation of this event.

A large number of men who had been disappointed in their endeavors to secure this first meeting of the legislature at other towns, in which they were interested, flocked to Omaha at this time in an angry and revengeful mood.

Hon. J. M. Woolworth, in his "Nebraska in 1857," in referring to this first legislature, says in regard to this mob, that "they arrayed themselves in the red blankets of the savages and loudly proclaimed their design of breaking up the Assembly. At the hour for the convening of the Houses, their halls were filled with these excited and desperate men. But before they were aware of it, resolutions assembling the two Houses in a joint session were passed; and the moment they had met, the Governor entered, and, without

prologue, delivered to each member elect the certificate of his election, pronounced his message, and declared the Assembly organized, directed each House to withdraw to complete its organization, and vanquished, in half an hour, every design either upon himself or the legislature. It was a time when anything less than the executive energy of Andrew Jackson would have involved the Governor in inextricable difficulties, and the Territory in anarchy."

The location of the territorial capital was the principal and most important business before the legislature, occupying a large portion of the time that that august body was in session, which was from the 16th day of January to the 17th day of March, 1855. The remainder of the session, after the settlement of the capital question, was devoted to the organization of counties, the location of the county seats, the granting of toll-bridge and ferry privileges, and the passage of a complete code of laws for the Territory.

The difficult capital question caused even more bitter feeling than had Acting-Governor Cuming's designation of Omaha in the first instance, as the point at which the legislature should assemble. The scenes and incidents that ensued during this session were exciting as well as amusing, and often, at this present day, form the most interesting portion of the reminiscences of some of the old settlers, who took a most active part in everything that then transpired. They entered into public affairs with a spirit that was bound to win. Their brains and hands were diligent and active—the former in hatching up schemes to thwart the designs of the enemy upon Omaha, and the latter in going down into their own pockets and handing out both money and town-lot stock to those who were willing to receive such favors and reciprocate for the same by voting for Omaha.

The legislature was largely made up of men who, although claiming a residence here, had their homes elsewhere, and who had ac-

quired their residence by one night's sleep in the district they represented. Such men talked the loudest about their fidelity to their beloved and confiding constituents, whose interests were ever dearest to their hearts. They thus amused themselves as well as others, for their constituents were scattered all over the United States. On the other hand there were a few, and only a few, who actually did reside in the Territory.

Mr. D. M. Johnston, of Ohio, who was the "member from Archer," had a political ambition that knew no bounds. Elated with his success in Nebraska—and wishing to ride two legislative horses at the same time—he obtained ten days' leave of absence, and going down to Kansas he ran for representative there, and was only defeated by a very close vote.

But the fact that non-residents largely made up the first legislature was only one of those incidents which are witnessed in all new countries.

The following gentlemen composed the first legislature—the Italics show the places represented, while the original place of residence follows the name of each member in Roman letters :

COUNCIL—*Archer*, Richardson county, J. L. Sharp, President, Tennessee. *Nebraska City*, Pierce now Otoe county, A. H. Bradford, Maine; H. P. Bennet, Maine; C. H. Cowles, New York. *Brownville*, Forney now Nemaha county, Richard Brown, Tennessee. *Fontenelle*, then in Dodge, but now in Washington county, M. H. Clark, New York. *Tekamah*, Burt county, B. R. Folsom, New York. *Omaha*, Douglas county, T. G. Goodwill, New York; A. D. Jones, Pennsylvania; O. D. Richardson, Michigan; S. E. Rogers, Kentucky. *Plattsmouth*, Cass county, Luke Nuckolls, Virginia. *Florence*, then in Washington county, J. C. Mitchell, Florence.

Officers of the Council.—Dr. G. L. Miller, chief clerk, Omaha; O. F. Lake, assistant clerk, Brownville; S. A. Lewis, Omaha, sergeant-at-arms; N. R. Folsom, of Tekamah, door-keeper.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—*Omaha*, Douglas county, A. J. Hanscom, speaker, Michigan; W. N. Byers, Ohio; Wm. Clancy, Michigan; F. Davidson, Virginia; Thomas Davis, England; A. D. Goyer, Michigan; A. J. Poppleton, Michigan; Robert Whitted, Tennessee. *Fort Calhoun*, Washington county, A. Archer, Vermont. *Florence*, Washington county, A. J. Smith, Pennsylvania. *Nebraska City*, in Pierce now Otoe county, G. Bennett, Virginia; J. H. Cowles, Ohio; J. H. Decker, Kentucky; W. H. Hail, Virginia; Wm. Maddox, Indiana. *Brownville*, in Forney now Nemaha county, W. A. Finney, Ohio; J. M. Wood, Kentucky. *Fontenelle*, then in Dodge, now in Washington county, E. R. Doyle, South Carolina; Wm. A. Richardson, New York. *Archer*, Richardson county, D. M. Johnston, Ohio; J. A. Singleton, Pennsylvania. *Rock Bluff*, Cass county, Wm. Kempton, Pennsylvania. *Plattsmouth*, Cass county, J. M. Latham, Virginia. *De Soto*, Burt county, J. B. Robertson, Ohio. *Tekamah*, Burt county, A. C. Purple, Massachusetts. *Kenosha*, Cass county, J. D. H. Thompson, Tennessee.

Officers of the House.—J. W. Paddock, chief clerk, Council Bluffs and Omaha; G. L. Eayre, assistant clerk, Glenwood, Iowa; J. L. Gibbs, sergeant-at-arms, Nebraska City; B. B. Thompson, door-keeper, Omaha.

Excitement ran at fever heat all the time that the capital contest was being fought. The contestants for the prize were Omaha, Fontenelle, Florence, Bellevue, Plattsmouth, Nebraska City, Brownville, and in fact all the embryo towns south of the Platte. These southern towns, one and all, were opposed to Omaha for the reason that she would be a less formidable rival to Plattsmouth without the capital than with it. The whole South Platte country was bitterly hostile to Omaha. Thus it will be seen that Omaha had a big fight on hand. It was only the clear foresightedness of the founders of the town, and their precautionary measures which they had taken to

meet the anticipated struggle, that enabled Omaha to come out victorious in the fierce contest for supremacy. The joint resolution locating the capitol building at Omaha was passed February 22d, 1855.

Some of the incidents of the fight are worth repeating. "Scrip Town" had been laid out by the owners of the original town site of Omaha, as one of the "precautionary measures," alluded to above. It was about a half-mile wide, and adjoined the north and west sides of Omaha. The stock was used to "induce" members of the legislature. Gen. Estabrook, then Territorial Attorney, who arrived in the Territory January 21st, 1855, and knows all about it, is our authority for the word "induce," which in this connection had a peculiar signification. This "scrip" was the salt that was sprinkled on the bird's tail, figuratively speaking, but it seems to us that the term "sugar" would be more appropriate, as it certainly "sweetened" some of Omaha's bitterest enemies. However, whether "sugar" or "salt," it was generally put where it would do the most good. But in one case, however, it was not so applied. One very "sharp" man, a leading member of the Council, had been given a number of shares, amounting to about one-twelfth of the "Scrip-Town" site, to "induce" him to vote for Omaha, such being the understanding. He, however, indiscreetly revealed the fact that he was going to vote against Omaha, and, as is usually the case, it soon leaked out. Now, Omaha wanted just another vote to make up for this one, which she was going to lose. A certain gentleman of Omaha, who was the leading champion of the city, said he could obtain the necessary vote, if they could regain possession of this stock, which was to be used for that purpose. A plan was accordingly laid and carried out. A shrewd and cool man, now a prominent St. Louis merchant, proved himself equal to the emergency and rescued the "scrip" from the treacherous hands into which it had fallen. He

met the "sharp" individual, as if by chance, and said to him, "I forgot to number those papers on the books. Let me have them and I'll attend to it at once." The papers were accordingly handed over, and that was the last ever seen of them by the "sharp," as the person to whom he had given them put them in his pocket and walked off, remarking to him that he might help himself if he could. It is safe to say that that "sharp" felt rather flat at this sudden, unexpected and unprofitable turn of affairs. Of course he immediately comprehended the meaning of the transaction, and it is pretty certain that he did not vote for Omaha.

The "scrip" was put into the hands of the gentleman who had agreed to secure the vote to make up for this desertion, and we have it on good authority that that much-wanted vote was obtained inside of twenty-four hours.

Towards the close of the capital fight James C. Mitchell, of Florence, who had been an exceedingly bitter enemy of Omaha, was "induced" to abate his hostility by the usual means, which were not then thoroughly known or appreciated by the general public.

Mitchell's influence, be it remembered, was sufficient to fix the capital at Omaha, or take it away, and as he had been, persuaded to favor Omaha, he was appointed as a reward and by agreement, the sole commissioner to locate the capitol building within some portion of the city, and the northern boundary of Douglas county—the county then embracing an extent of territory reaching from a ravine on the north side of the city south to the Platte river, and west to the Elkhorn—was extended, by proclamation of the Governor, so as to take in the whole of "scrip-town," in order to give Mitchell plenty of room. When the vote was about to be put in the Council, he explained that, as others, with the same interest as himself, had gone back on him, it would now be every man for himself, and that he would therefore locate the capitol within the city limits of Omaha,

somewhere on the line between the Clancy claim and the Jeffery claim. The line between these two claims ran from the Sulphur Springs back to the high ground. He was favorably impressed, he said, with the location near the Sulphur Springs, and also with that of the high ground further back. But he would not determine until further examination.

A short time thereafter Mr. Mitchell stuck his stake for the capitol building on Capitol Hill, where it was afterwards built. In the summer following Mr. Mitchell advertised about sixty lots in the city of Omaha for sale at auction, and the lots sold for about \$60 each. Whether there was any connection between Mitchell's location of the capitol and those lots, we leave the reader to draw his own inference.

A member from a certain county, in which he had never lived, was given some shares in order to "induce" another member from the South Platte country to go for Omaha. This man, whom we shall call P., for convenience sake, wanted the shares himself, and he accordingly advised the South Platte gentleman, Mr. T., to take nothing but money. T., acting on this advice, demanded \$1,000 for his vote. One of the ferry company's chief manipulators, Mr. J., told T. to go in and vote and it would be all right, as he would get the money. Next day J. went over the river, and T. never got any money or shares either. Mr. P., who had retained the shares, said they had been given to him to use to the best advantage, and as he himself was the most doubtful man he knew of, he had concluded to purchase himself.

Several of the members of the legislature were residents of Glenwood, Iowa, where a very deep interest was felt in having the capital located at Plattsmouth. Some of the members who came from Glenwood failed to vote for Plattsmouth, and at the close of the session an indignation meeting was actually held at Glenwood

to call to account "their representatives for misrepresenting them in the Nebraska legislature."

Col. J. L. Sharpe, president of the Council, resided at Glenwood, and represented Richardson County. He had promised, owing to the usual inducements, to vote for Omaha, but he went for Plattsmouth after all, having intended to do so from the first.

Luke Nuckolls, representing Cass county, and Bennett and Bradford, representing Pierce, now Otoe county, all lived at Glenwood.

In the House, Glenwood sent Kempton and Latham to represent Cass county, and Thompson to represent Nemaha county. Latham, originally a lawyer from Virginia, having gone back on Plattsmouth, never dared to go back to Glenwood, for they would have lynched him. He died the following summer at Council Bluffs; whether he died from grief at the indignation of Glenwood, or not, this historian has not been able to ascertain. Thompson, on his return to Glenwood, narrowly escaped a flagellation from his outraged constituency, whom he had misrepresented.

Omaha's cause was ably and shrewdly championed in the Council by O. D. Richardson and T. G. Goodwill, and by A. J. Poppleton and A. J. Hanscom in the House. Hanscom, who would as soon fight as eat in those days, was always called on when there was likely to be any trouble, and either in fisticuffs, debate, or "tactics," he generally succeeded in coming out of the affair on top of the heap. Many good stories are told of him, some of which we shall refer to hereafter.

It was he who had been selected to undertake the job of getting the control of the House of Representatives, and he did it. He was elected speaker, and thus secured the appointment of committees, which gave Omaha considerable advantage. The following paragraph from the pen of Dr. Miller, editor of the Omaha *Herald*, illustrates to perfection the early legislative days of Nebraska:

"Hanscom and Poppleton carried the art of winking to its highest perfection in those days. The latter was always first recognized by speaker Hanscom when he wanted the floor. The speaker was particular about keeping order. Any refractory member, opposed to Omaha, who refused to take his seat when ordered to, was emphatically notified that if he didn't sit down he would get knocked down. The result was usually *satisfactory to the speaker*. The excitement over the capital question was, at times, very great. The lobbies, we remember, were once crowded with the respective parties to the contest, armed with bludgeons, brick-bats, and pistols. A fight was thought to be imminent, but it did not occur."

Among the members of the first legislature were two Missourians who claimed to represent some county in Nebraska, both claiming the same seat. One of them was a preacher named Wood, who, as chaplain, did the praying for the House of Representatives. When the contest for his seat came up, he promised to an Omaha man that he would vote for Omaha on the capital question, if they would give him his seat. He got his seat in that way, thus knocking his opponent out of the ring. A day or two afterwards he met the Omaha man to whom he had made the promise, and putting on a very long face he said, "Mr. H., I am very sorry, indeed, to be obliged to inform you that I shall, owing to the force of circumstances, be compelled to vote against Omaha!"

"The devil you say!" exclaimed Mr. H. "You're a ——— infernal lying old hypocrite!"

"Those are hard words, my dear Mr. H., but ———"

"I reiterate it, that you are an infernal lying old hypocrite. You're a wolf in sheep's clothing. And, by gracious! you've said your last prayer before this legislature. If there is any more praying to be done I will do it myself. That's the kind of a man I am."

Mr. H. kept his word, and fixed it so that Mr. Wood's services

as chaplain were dispensed with from that day forward, but Wood went on and served out his term as a member of the House in the seat that he obtained by his promise. The Omaha men, however, made it so warm for him during the remainder of the session that he passed anything but a pleasant term in office.

After the settlement of the capital fight, the legislature transacted its other business in a comparatively quiet way. Among the numerous bills passed was one making William P. Snowden auctioneer for Douglas county. Several amusing incidents occurred during the remainder of the session, one of which we shall here relate, as it is too good to be lost. For the main points we are indebted to "M.-I.-Grant," whose other name is J. Sterling Morton, who, in "A pen Picture from the Pioneer Legislature," published in the *Omaha Herald* a few years ago, gives a graphic account of the episode. Mr. A. D. Jones made a rather "hifalutin" speech in opposition to the chartering of certain banks in the Territory, the bill being called the Territorial Bank Act. Mr. Jones denounced the whole scheme as savoring too much of a "wild cat" nature. He appealed to the honorable body to guard their reputation; to consider the esteem in which posterity would hold the founders of this commonwealth; he begged of them not to entail upon the people of the Territory a financial measure that would lead to distress and ruin, and for which they would be cursed by their constituents for many years to come. Mr. Jones soared aloft in his flights of rhetoric, and declared that "when he (Jones) should be gathered to his fathers, and an humble monument had been erected to his memory, upon the site of his beautiful home in Park Wild, it would gratify his soul, to look down from the high battlements of heaven—the regions of the blessed—and read upon that monument the simple and truthful inscription: 'Here lies an honest man—He voted against "wild-cat" banks in Nebraska.'



THE MONUMENT THAT MR. JONES DESIRED.

his general appearance. It was a thin, high-toned, cracked voice. In fact, it was more of a squeal than anything else, and whenever he spoke he attracted considerable attention on this account. Bradford was in favor of the bill, to which Mr. Jones had just alluded to as being of a feline character. Bradford rose to his feet, and in his squealing tones of voice replied to Mr. Jones about as follows:

"Mr. Pres-i-dent: The gentle-man from Park Wild says he is hon-ist; I sup-pose he is. I don't sup-pose he would lie about so small a mat-ter. He speaks of dy-ing; but if he is as hon-ist as he says he is I don't think he'll ever die. No, sir; he'll be trans-

Mr. Jones resumed his seat, and wiped the perspiration from his brow with his bandanna pocket handkerchief, while an expression of satisfaction at his eloquent effort seemed to rest upon his features.

A deep silence ensued in the Council chamber, which was soon broken, however, by Allen H. Bradford, who represented Otoe county. Bradford was a short and fat man with a broad face and big round head. But his voice was not at all in accordance with

lated; he'll go up in a char-*iot* of *f-i-r-e*, like Eli-jah and the other old fellows. I can almost see him a-going up; *high-er!* *high-er!* *high-er!*

"For my part, Mr. *Presi-dent*, I wish he'd go *now*. He talks about the time when he shall be a-look-*ing* down from the high battlements of heav-*en*. I wish he was up there *now*, a-singin' forever more, among the blessed, instead of being down here a-makin' speeches which don't do any good away out here in *Nebras-ky*."

That was all Mr. Bradford had to say. He, too, like Jones, sat down satisfied. A general laughter followed his effort, and Bradford could not resist the temptation to join in with the rest. If Mr. Jones didn't laugh then, he probably has done so often since that time, whenever this incident has been recalled to his mind.

Bradford has since been a delegate to Congress from Colorado, and has also been a Judge.

We have given only a few of the scenes and incidents of the first Nebraska legislature, but they are sufficient samples from which the whole session can be judged.

Omaha secured the capital. She fought hard to get it, and she had to contend for its retention at every session of the legislature, until the year 1858, from which time she retained the capital till she became a State in 1867.

Mark W. Izard having been promoted from the office of Marshal to that of Governor, entered upon the duties of chief territorial executive, February 20, 1855, while this session of the legislature was in progress, filling the vacancy caused by the death of Governor Burt. Mr. E. R. Doyle, who had accompanied Governor Burt hither from South Carolina, and had become a member of the legislature, succeeded Izard as Marshal.

CHAPTER X.

THE FIRST EXECUTIVE BALL.

A GRAND AFFAIR IN HONOR OF GOV. IZARD—CUMING SUGGESTS IT
—THE GENTLEMEN AND LADIES WHO WERE THERE—HAPS AND
MISHAPS.

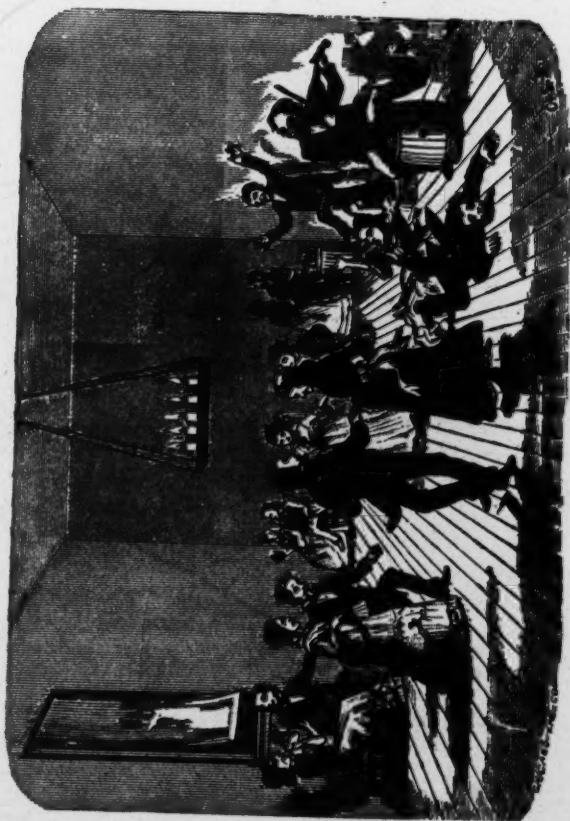
HE first and only executive ball ever given in Omaha came off in January, 1855. It was in honor of Governor Izard, who had just been appointed to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Governor Burt, and who soon afterwards entered upon the discharge of the duties of his office. The affair took place at the City Hotel. The building, somewhat enlarged, is still standing at the southwest corner of Harney and Eleventh streets, and was afterwards occupied for a time as a residence by Ezra Millard, who still owns it but rents it to other parties as a dwelling.

The description of that ball was graphically given by Dr. Miller, in the *Herald*, in January, 1867, and as he knows all about those early times, we have taken the liberty of quoting his account of it nearly in full, as follows:

"Izard was a stately character physically, mentally rather weak, and accordingly felt a lively sense of the dignity with which the appointment clothed him. He had never known such an honor before, and it bore upon him heavily. To the few persons who then constituted the principal population of the city, the Governor was careful to intimate a desire to have his gubernatorial advent suitably

celebrated. The facetious and wary Cuming suggested the idea of giving Izard an executive ball. The larger of the two rooms which then constituted the building was the theatre of a scene perhaps the most ludicrous that was ever witnessed in the history of public receptions. The rooms had a single coat of what was then called plastering, composed of a frozen mixture of mud and ice, a very thin coating at that. The floor was rough and unplanned, very trying to dancers, and not altogether safe for those who preferred the upright position. It had been energetically scrubbed for the occasion. The night being dreadfully cold and the heating apparatus failing to warm the room, the water froze upon the floor and could not be melted by any then known process. Rough cotton-wood boards on either side of the room were substitutes for chairs.

"The hour of seven having arrived, the grand company began to assemble. Long before the appointed hour His Arkansas Excellency appeared in the dancing hall. He and Jim Orton, 'The Band,' of Council Bluffs, reached the scene at about the same moment. The Governor was very polite to Jim, who was just tight enough to be correspondingly polite to the Governor. Gov. Izard was the guest of nine ladies who were all that could be mustered even for a state occasion in Omaha. They were Mrs. T. B. Cumings, Mrs. Fenner Ferguson, Mrs. J. Sterling Morton, Mrs. C. B. Smith, Mrs. Fleming Davidson, Mrs. A. J. Hanscom, Mrs. A. D. Jones, Mrs. S. E. Rogers and Mrs. G. L. Miller. Two of the ladies could not dance, and accordingly their places were supplied by the same number of gentlemen. The Governor had a son by the name of James. He was His Excellency's private secretary, and wishing to present a high example of style, he came in at a late hour escorting Mrs. Davidson. His bearing was fearfully stately and dignified. He wore a white vest and white kids, as any gentleman would do, but these were put in rather discordant contrast with the surroundings. Paddock, Popple-



THE FIRST EXECUTIVE BALL.

ton, Cumming, Smith, Morton, Ferguson, Goodwill, Clancy, Folsom, besides a large assemblage of legislators attended. The latter crowded around gazing with astonishment upon the large number of ladies in attendance.

"Jim Orton was the solitary fiddler, occupying one corner of the room. The dance opened. It was a gay and festive occasion. Notwithstanding the energetic use of green cotton-wood, the floor continued icy. During the dancing several accidents happened. One lady, now well known in Nebraska, fell flat. Others did likewise. The supper came off about midnight and consisted of coffee with brown sugar and no milk; sandwiches of peculiar size; dried apple pie; the sandwiches, we may observe, were very thick, and were made of a singular mixture of bread of radical complexion and *bacon*.

"The Governor, having long lived in a hot climate, stood around shivering in the cold, but buoyed up by the honors thus showered upon him, bore himself with the most amiable fortitude.

"There being no tables in those days, the supper was passed 'round. At the proper time, the Governor, under a deep sense of his own consequence, made a speech, returning his thanks for the high honors done him."

Thus does Dr. Miller describe the first and last executive ball that ever took place in Omaha as it came off over twenty-one years ago when the town did not contain a dozen ladies all told.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FIRST MURDER TRIAL.

DR. C. A. HENRY SHOOTS HOLLISTER AT BELLEVUE—HIS TRIAL AT OMAHA BEFORE JUSTICE FERGUSON—O. P. MASON PITCHES INTO JUDGE FERGUSON FOR HIS HARSHNESS TO THE PRISONER—AN ACCOMODATING SHERIFF—HENRY IS FINALLY DISCHARGED.



N the afternoon of the 20th of April, 1855, a messenger came up to Omaha from Bellevue with a message from Judge Ferguson to Gov. Izard, requesting him to send down Gen. Estabrook, the Territorial Attorney, and Sheriff P. G. Peterson, to investigate a murder.

Gen. Estabrook, Sheriff Peterson, B. P. Rankin, and Joe Strickland, one of the printers of the *Nebraskian*, arrived at Bellevue, on horseback, at midnight, and there learned that Dr. Charles A. Henry had shot and killed a young man named George Hollister, who was in the employ of Col. Sarpy. Henry was imprisoned in the Indian blacksmith shop, where he was safely guarded from the men who had threatened to lynch him.

Henry was a cool, shrewd fellow, and a town lot speculator; and the fatal affray had arisen out of a difficulty about a boundary line. Next morning Rankin called, by request, on Henry, and in three-quarters of an hour came out laughing. In reply to an inquiry, Rankin said he was laughing at the force of habit as displayed in Henry's case. Rankin had found him studying a map of Iowa, and

he had asked Rankin if he didn't think that such and such a spot was a good place to lay out a town.

The coroner's jury acted under the laws of Iowa, as no laws covering the case had yet been passed by Nebraska. Henry was held for examination, which took place before Judge Ferguson, who committed him to imprisonment, with shackles and handcuffs, and also ordering that he should be chained to the floor. Sheriff Peterson took charge of the prisoner, and carried out the order of the Court. Henry was confined in Peterson's own house, a small one-story frame structure, which then stood at the southwest corner of Farnham and Tenth streets. Peterson lived in the rear part and rented the front portion of it for a saloon and gambling hell, which was well patronized. This was the fifth house erected in Omaha, and is standing yet, but on a different location, having been moved from the corner south on Tenth street, next to the present City Hotel.*

At the first term of the United States District Court held in the Territory a grand jury was specially called for this case. In the meantime a local U. S. attorney had been appointed, and thereupon Gen. Estabrook abandoned the suit. The grand jury failed to indict Henry. Judge Ferguson instead of discharging him, said as he had examined the case himself, he was satisfied that the murder had been committed and he should re-commit the prisoner with the same order—shackles and handcuffs; and at the same time order a new jury to be called.

A. J. Poppleton and O. P. Mason were the attorneys for Henry. This was the first public appearance of O. P. Mason in Nebraska. He had known Henry in Ohio, and he felt that the treatment that Henry was receiving at the hands of the Court was an unwarranted outrage. Mason was then a seedy looking individual, weighing about 130

* See page 37, and also the chapter on "Old Landmarks, and Incidents connected therewith."

pounds; but his appearance was no criterion of his ability. He addressed the Court on the subject of the order as to the shackles and handcuffs, and the chaining of the prisoner to the floor, in terms of the most terrible and withering invective that ever proceeded from the mouth of a lawyer. Instead of committing him for contempt, the Judge yielded to him and modified the order.

About that time a flotilla of steamboats, one of which was commanded by Capt. Wilcox, now of the dry-goods firm of Stephens & Wilcox, came up the river with a lot of government troops on board for Ft. Pierre. The cholera, which was then raging throughout the country, had broken out among the soldiers, one of whom had already died. The surgeon was in a boat below, and everybody asked for a doctor. Dr. Miller was selected to attend the cases, and taking his wife along with him, he proceeded up the river with the troops, and was absent all summer. The house then occupied by him, which yet stands on Dodge street, just back of the Jones House, was turned over, all furnished, until he should return, to Gen. Estabrook's family, who had just arrived.

The departure of Dr. Miller proved a fortunate circumstance for Henry, who was himself a physician, and during the absence of Miller he was the only doctor in Omaha. The accommodating sheriff, Mr. Peterson, accompanied him in his professional visits. Dr. Henry, with his shackles on, thus made many warm friends, and the consequence was that the next grand jury did not indict him. This ended the case, which was the first regular murder trial in Nebraska.

Dr. Henry afterwards became a very active and enterprising citizen of Omaha. In the summer of 1856 he built the first portion of Pioneer Block, which was then called Henry's Block. He also built in company with another man the building in which the first drug store was located and run by himself.

CHAPTER XII.

FIRST ATTEMPT TO REMOVE THE CAPITAL.

BELLEVUE WANTS THE CAPITAL—SARPY, MORTON, CUMING, AND OTHERS AT THE HEAD OF THE FIRST CAPITAL REMOVAL SCHEME—A PLOT TO SEND GOV. IZARD TO WASHINGTON, SO THAT HE WOULD NOT INTERFERE—A SUCCESSFUL COUNTERPLOT—DEATH OF DOYLE—RANKIN SUCCEEDS HIM.



AT the second session of the legislature during the winter of 1855-56, a scheme was started to remove the capital to Douglas City, as it was called on paper, the objective point being in reality Bellevue. Gen. Sarpy, J. Sterling Morton, Secretary Cuming, and a host of South Platte men, all of whom were hostile to Omaha, were interested in the project, to which they had committed nearly every man in the Territory outside of Omaha, and they were accordingly sanguine of success. However, to make it more sure, they thought it necessary to get Gov. Izard out of the way, so that Secretary Cuming, as Acting-Governor in his absence, could sign the bill. To accomplish their design on Izard they resorted to a little strategy. The capital removers had up to this time greatly abused the Governor, and had frequently called him "granny" or "grandmother Izard." They changed their tactics now, and J. Sterling Morton and other members of the legislature introduced some very complimentary resolutions concerning him with the view of thus inducing him to go on a mission to Washington to

procure some appropriation or attend to some other kind of business. These resolutions greatly pleased His Excellency, and he promised to visit Washington if they were passed, he being entirely ignorant of the plot at the time.

Dr. Miller, who was a member of the legislature, and faithful to Omaha's interest, had been posted in regard to the whole business. He got up and pitched into those resolutions in a vigorous manner, causing considerable commotion thereby. Izard was somewhat disturbed by Miller's remarks, which did not fully reveal the object of the resolution, and in a whisper that was heard all over the house, he said, to a certain prominent citizen of Omaha in order to have him go to Dr. Miller to ask him to desist, "For God's sake let that pass. It's a good endorsement for me."

Izard was called out into the hall, where he talked the matter over with the gentleman mentioned above, and it was then that Izard first learned of the soft soap game that was being played on him. It was then agreed that the resolutions should be allowed to pass, but that Izard should not go to Washington.

The resolutions were passed, and Gov. Izard remained at Omaha according to promise. This defeated this scheme. But the whole winter was spent in attempts to remove the capital to some point, it didn't make much difference where, if it could only be taken from Omaha. But Izard stayed right here, thus preventing the carrying out of the plans; and Cuming finally agreed not to have anything further to do with the various schemes.

It was during this the second session of the legislature that Leavitt L. Bowen was one of the representatives of Douglas county, and his seat was contested by Silas A. Strickland on the ground that he lived at Council Bluffs, being in fact a partner of lawyer A. C. Ford, who was afterwards killed by the vigilantes out in Colorado. Gen. Estabrook was attorney for Strickland in the contest, which re-

sulted in favor of Bowen. It was while Gen. Estabrook was making the closing argument in the evening that it was announced that United States Marshal Eli R. Doyle, who had succeeded Izard, had fallen down stairs in the Western Exchange building, receiving fatal injuries, and dying in a few minutes afterwards. Benjamin P. Rankin was the successor of Doyle, and held the office of marshal for four years, residing in Nebraska till 1861.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SECOND CAPITAL REMOVAL SCHEME.

A BAD OUTLOOK FOR OMAHA—TWO-THIRDS OF THE LEGISLATURE PLEDGED AGAINST HER—M'COMAS COMMANDS THE CAPITAL REMOVAL BRIGADE—THE MYTHICAL DOUGLAS CITY—THE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE BOUGHT UP WITH ITS STOCK—AN EXPOSE—OMAHA'S TACTICS TO GAIN TIME—HANSCOM AND SEELEY TALK THE LEGISLATURE NEARLY TO DEATH—THE ATTEMPTED ARREST OF HANSCOM—"GRANNY" IZARD GIVES THE LEGISLATURE SOME ADVICE—A VERY SCARED MAN—THE PASSAGE OF THE BILL PRE-
VENTED. §



DURING the next session of the legislature, in the winter of 1856-57, the capital removers again came up smiling with two-thirds of the legislature pledged against Omaha, so that they could suspend the rules and pass the capital removal bill over the Governor's veto. They proposed to send the capital up Salt Creek, by relocating it at a mythical place to be called Douglas City, which was to be located about where Lincoln, the present capital, was afterwards fixed. This scheme was principally engineered by ex-Governor McComas, from Virginia, who was a very sharp wire-puller and manipulator in such affairs.

These fellows had their new town site all laid out into shares, which they had issued to the members, who had their pockets lined with the scrip. Nearly everybody had been seen and sweet-

ened with this scrip, and it is said that even some of Omaha's own men accepted some of it.

Jones, of Dakota county, had a fist full of it, and told Hanscom about it, who at the proper time persuaded him to expose the whole business. Jones walked into the legislative halls and told his little story, showing up his scrip, which he said he had taken to use as evidence of the exposure he had made. A very great excitement was thus created for a short time, but it was soon forgotten in the tumult of the subsequent proceedings. The capital removers elected their speaker, Isaac L. Gibbs, and tried to ride rough-shod over everybody, but eventually failed. Omaha had only eight votes out of thirty-five in the House. This number, however, was increased by one vote, which was secured from Dodge county; but at no time did Omaha have enough votes to prevent a suspension of the rules. Gibbs, the speaker, paid no regard whatever to parliamentary laws, and it is a fact that it was a very *rough* legislature in every sense of the word. The enemies of Omaha were determined to pass the capital removal bill, and Omaha was equally as determined to prevent it, as everything was at stake with the citizens of the place.

To gain time was the main object Omaha had in view, and to do it they "talked against time" on every possible occasion, consuming several days in trivial arguments. Jonas Seeley and A. J. Hanscom did most of the talking. Hanscom had control of the campaign for the defense, and arranged nearly all the tactics.

A man named Brown, from Plattsmouth, was chief clerk, and as the Omaha men didn't like him very well, and wanted to oust him, they took occasion to kill time by taking up his journal every morning, whether it was right or wrong, and literally picking it to pieces on the slightest pretenses. It thus frequently happened that half a day or more was consumed in correcting the journal. Brown was

afterwards, forced to stepped down and out, and Sterritt M. Curran, of Omaha, stepped up and in.

Gen. Strickland, now a resident of Omaha, but then of Bellevue, was a recognized leader and champion of the South Platte folks, and whenever he would move anything to bring on a direct fight Hanscom would make some dilatory motion—to lay on the table, to postpone to a certain day, or indefinitely postpone—thus consuming time, all of which was a part of the tactics.

It was a very stormy session all the way through. At one time the speaker ordered the sergeant-at-arms to arrest Hanscom, who bluffed him off by saying, "Come no further. You are safer there than you will be if you come any nearer." The officer evidently saw that he meant what he said, and the arrest was not made. After the intense excitement that was caused by Hanscom's bluff had some what subsided, the champions of Omaha availed themselves of every opportunity to pitch into the speaker, until they actually made it so warm for him that he dared not occupy the chair. They made him sick; at least he pretended to be sick, and Strickland was appointed by him to fill the chair in his absence. The question then arose whether he could appoint him from day to day, or for a longer period, and a whole day was thus consumed in argument.

The South Platte party asked the Governor to call out 300 militia to protect them from the Omaha crowd, which was composed of eight men. The next morning Gov. Izard, whom they had called "grandmother," assembled both branches of the legislature together and made them a speech. It was short and pointed. Said he: "Gentlemen, it is entirely unnecessary for me to call out the militia. Go on and attend to your legislative business. Behave yourselves, and your *grandmothers* will protect you."

Every effort was made to induce members of the opposition to

flop over in favor of Omaha, but they were all avaricious, and a sum total of \$20,000 was demanded for votes.

One man, hailing from a South Platte county, was so scared and apprehensive of the results of the excitement and turbulence that prevailed, that he wished to go home and tell his friends that he was really afraid of his life. But he wanted from Omaha \$5,000 as a compensation for his absence. "We have not got any money to give to men to pay them to go home and slander us," said one of Omaha's leaders, who didn't think his being afraid of his life was a very good recommendation for the city. Of course he didn't get a cent, and he soon got over his scare.

However, enough votes were secured—but exactly how, this historian is not aware—for Omaha to prevent the passage of the bill over the Governor's veto, which virtually defeated the enemy.

Parties from the South Platte country had come here resolved to "bust up" Omaha, and even tried to divide Douglas county and remove her county seat to Florence. Omaha had her hand full and running over with fights, and she had nothing else to do that winter but to act on the defensive.

The South Platters tried for a while to tire out the Omaha squad by holding night sessions, but finally an Omaha man "satisfied" several parties that they were doing wrong, and they came over and voted with Omaha. That ended the capital removal business for that session, more than one half of which was taken up by this fight. The rest of the session passed off quietly.

Just before the final vote was taken on the capital removal bill, Seeley, of Dodge county, was turned out of his seat for having previously voted for Omaha.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LAST ROUND IN THE CAPITAL REMOVAL FIGHT.

THE SCHEMERS COME UP SMILING AGAIN—HANSCOM APPEALED TO, TO CHAMPION OMAHA'S CAUSE—HANSCOM THROWS THE SPEAKER UNDER THE TABLE—AN EXCITING SCENE—BLACK EYES AND BLOODY NOSES—HOW STRICKLAND WAS SILENCED—THE LEGISLATURE BREAKS UP IN A ROW, AND ADJOURNS TO FLORENCE—ARRIVAL OF GOV. RICHARDSON, THE SUCCESSOR OF IZARD—THE CAPITOL BUILDING—THE CAPITAL FINALLY REMOVED TO LINCOLN IN 1867, WHEN NEBRASKA WAS ADMITTED AS A STATE.



WHEN the next session of the legislature convened in the winter of 1857-58, the same old gang of capital removers assembled at Omaha, resolved as before to make a desperate effort for the success of their old scheme. Hanscom, who was not a member of the legislature, except as a lobbyist, was appealed to as usual to do all in his power to resist the attack on Omaha, whose recognized leader he had become in such important affairs. The matter was pretty thoroughly discussed among the most prominent citizens, who wanted to ascertain whether it was best to pay out any money, as usual, to retain the capital. Some of the old settlers tell it that Hanscom said that he, for one, had been paying out money long enough, and that now he proposed to "whale" somebody.

Soon afterwards they sent for Hanscom and told him that the speaker, named Decker, an avowed enemy of Omaha, had armed

himself with a revolver, and that his party were likewise prepared for any emergency that might arise. A very lively row soon ensued.

One morning the house went into committee of the whole, electing as chairman Dr. Thrall, the present United States Marshal at Cincinnati, Ohio, and who is a cousin to Mr. George Thrall, landlord of the Grand Central Hotel of this city. Dr. Thrall thereupon at once stepped up and filled the speaker's chair.

The Omaha men immediately resorted to their old tactics of talking against time, and it is a fact that George Claves kept the floor until the middle of the afternoon, when a message was received from the clerk of the council. Under the joint rules of the legislature no message could be received by one branch when the other, that sent it, was not in session at the time. The council had adjourned and left their room. When the clerk of the council appeared in the house the question was at once raised whether the message which he bore could be received. Mr. Decker, the speaker, walked up to the speaker's stand, with the intention of resuming his seat, which Thrall refused to let him have. Decker grabbed for the gavel in Thrall's hand, announcing at the same time that the committee of the whole would rise and receive the message from the council. That was entirely out of order as it was known that the council was not in session.

Hanscom, under the usual resolution passed at the beginning of the session inviting ex-members of the legislature within the bar, had spent pretty much all of his time there. He had taken a seat on the step near the speaker's stand to quiet any difficulty that might arise, or to take a hand in it if it were necessary. When Decker came up and endeavored to snatch the gavel, Hanscom yelled out to Thrall, "Hit the rascal over the head with the gavel." Decker was on the opposite side of the speaker's stand, and was attempting not only to seize the gavel but to push Thrall out of the seat, while



A VERY STRIKING AFFAIR—A NEBRASKA TERRITORIAL LEGISLATIVE SCENE.

Hanscom, who had jumped to his feet, pulled Thrall back again, and thus he was kept going back and forth for a short time between Decker and Hanscom. J. W. Paddock and Mike Murphy, who were both members of the legislature, jumped up to prevent Decker from further interfering with Thrall. Paddock got hold of Decker's hand and pulled him down from the stand, and while they were scuffling, Hanscom sprang forward and grabbing him by the back of the neck and the seat of the pantaloons laid him away or rather threw him under the table, so that Paddock and Murphy would not hurt him. It was indeed a very kind and considerate act. This historian has been reliably informed that it was in no gentle manner that Decker was "chucked" under the table. About fifty persons sprang to their feet. All was excitement and uproar, and when it gradually subsided it was found that several persons had been badly licked. Bloody noses and black eyes were too numerous to mention. It was hard to tell which were in the majority—the ayes or the noes.

The Omaha men thus gained possession of the field, and as soon as the fuss was over, and the speaker was out of the chair, the enemy was cleaned out in every other way.

Judge Kinney, of Nebraska City, who was opposed to Omaha, was called on for a speech. He mounted one of the desks and began to talk. Thrall was told by Hanscom to call him to order, as Kinney was not a member.

Strickland jumped up on one of the tables and sang out, "I have the right to talk, I am a member."

Thrall ordered him to sit down, but he would not do it.

Hanscom told him if he didn't, he would knock him down.

"Well," said Strickland, cooling off a little, "I guess I can go out of doors and talk." As there was no objection made to that, that ended the fuss for that day.

The legislature met next morning, and instead of passing a joint

resolution to remove to another point, each house passed a resolution adjourning to Florence, thus virtually breaking up in a row. Dr. Miller was president of the council, and refused to put the motion to adjourn to Florence. The gentleman from Otoe who made the motion, put it himself and declared it carried, whereupon the council adjourned. In the house a similar resolution was carried unanimously, the Omaha men not voting. To Florence they went, but their action did not amount to anything. They were not recognized as a legislature by the Governor, and they did not get any pay for the time that they spent at Florence.

This legislature, as well as its predecessors, reminds one very much of the Douglas County Republican Conventions of late years. The engraving accompanying this chapter—which, by the way, may be called a very “striking picture”—illustrates very faithfully not only this particular session of the legislature, but also the three previous sessions, in each of which some very animated and boisterous brawls and tumultuous disturbances occurred. A knock-down was no unusual thing, as the war of words generally resulted in a set-to at fisticuffs. The persuasive revolver also played an important part at times in the spirited debate, and whenever it was presented, it generally proved a very convincing argument, for the time being at least.

Gov. W. A. Richardson, of Quincy, Illinois, the successor of Gov. Izard, who had gone back to Arkansas, arrived at Omaha shortly after the legislature broke up and went to Florence. He remained here till February, 1859. The next governor was Gov. Black, of Nebraska City, originally from Pennsylvania, who had been promoted from a judgeship. Gov. Saunders, appointed by President Lincoln, succeeded Black, coming here in 1861 from Iowa.

This (the fourth) session of the legislature was held in the Territorial Capitol, an illustration of which is herewith presented.

The engraving, however, does not do justice to the building, as it was made from a photograph taken after the colonnade, which surrounded it, had been torn down, having been pronounced unsafe. When the columns were standing it is said that the structure presented a very handsome appearance, excelled by but very few other build-



THE OLD TERRITORIAL CAPITOL.

ings in the country at that time. It stood on Capitol Hill on the spot now covered by the High School building. It was erected by Bovey & Armstrong. George C. Bovey was a practical builder, and Major Armstrong was the monied man of the firm as well as the superintendent. The contract was made the 29th of November, 1855, the time of completing the structure being the 15th of September, 1856. It was not finished, however, till some time in 1857. They employed 150 men and horses in their brick-yard while erecting this and other buildings. The cost of the capitol was \$100,000.

The capital removal question was never again agitated after 1858, to any great extent, until Nebraska became a State in 1867.

Congress passed the enabling act for the admission of Nebraska as a State on the 21st of March, 1864. Under that act the electors of the Territory held an election and adopted a State constitution, at the same time electing State officers under that constitution, which prohibited the right of suffrage to the negroes.

Congress afterwards passed another act to the effect that Nebraska

could only be admitted by a change of her constitution so that the right of suffrage should not ever be denied to any man on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

It was under this revised constitution that Nebraska came into the Union as a State in 1867. It was provided in the constitution that the first State legislature could locate the seat of government. Gov. Butler, the first elected governor, called the first State legislature by proclamation to meet at Omaha on the 16th day of May, 1867. At that session the capital was removed to Lincoln without any opposition from the citizens of Omaha. The railroads were centering here then, and it was seen that Omaha's prosperity did not depend on the capital. She had now got other and richer resources. Flush times had set in at the close of the war, and the people had come to the conclusion that it was not much of a benefit to them after all.

Upon the removal of the capital to Lincoln the people of Omaha acquired the title to Capitol Square, as it had been donated to the State for legislative purposes only, provided that it should revert to the donors in case it should ever be used for any other object. The legislature, in granting Omaha's petition, donated it for school purposes, and the magnificent structure that now stands thereon and overlooks the city, was built during the years 1870, '71 and '72, the capitol having been torn down to make room for it.

CHAPTER XV.

OMAHA FROM 1856 TO 1860.

THE GOOD TIMES OF 1856—INFLATION OF THE CURRENCY—OMAHA LOOMS UP—A SEVERE WINTER—OMAHA GETS A CITY CHARTER IN FEBRUARY, 1857, AND PUTS ON METROPOLITAN AIRS—REAL ESTATE BEGINS TO WEAKEN—THE GREAT FINANCIAL BREAK-DOWN—WILD-CAT BANKS—GENERAL DEPRESSION—CITY SCRIP—THE PIKE'S PEAK EXCITEMENT HELPS THE CITY—LIVELY TIMES AGAIN.



URING the year 1856 there was an inflation of the currency all over the country, fully equal to that immediately succeeding the close of the civil war in 1865 and 1866. Times were good everywhere, and particularly so in Omaha. Everybody considered himself rich or likely soon to be. This state of affairs continued all through 1856. Real estate sold at high prices, and corner lots were in great demand at almost any figures. Speculation ran wild in Omaha, as it did in many other new western towns at that time, and everybody dabbled in real estate. Money was made easily and quickly. The motto was "quick sales and big profits."

Omaha grew rapidly in population, and a large number of buildings were put up during that year.

The winter of 1856-7 was a very severe one and has ever since been considered the hardest season ever experienced in Omaha. The weather was fair through the fall, but on the 30th of November, a

snow-storm commenced and continued until the morning of the 3d of December, having fallen to the depth of three feet on the level. The weather was exceedingly cold after the storm, and remained so all winter, with the exception of a few days in February, 1857. The snow that had fallen at the very opening of winter did not begin to go off till some time in the month of March.

Omaha, having reached a population of from 1,500 to 1,800, asked permission of the legislature to put on city clothes, and a charter was accordingly granted to her in February, the first election occurring on the first Monday in March, 1857. The result was as follows: Jesse Lowe, mayor; L. R. Tuttle, recorder; J. A. Miller, city marshal; Charles Grant, city solicitor; Lyman Richardson, city assessor; A. S. Morgan, city engineer; A. Chappel, health officer; A. D. Jones, T. G. Goodwill, G. C. Bovey, H. H. Visscher, Thomas Davis, Wm. N. Byers, Wm. W. Wyman, Thomas O'Connor, C. H. Downs, J. H. Kellom, James Creighton, councilmen. The Council met and organized on the 5th of March, and the first ordinance passed was "to prevent swine from running at large." The first warrant was issued to secretary Thomas B. Cuming for books and stationery furnished to the council.

In May, 1857, an ordinance was passed dividing the city into three wards, as follows: 1st ward—all that part of the city lying south of Farnham street; 2d—all that part of the city lying between the north side of Farnham street and the south side of Capitol avenue; 3d—all that part of the city north of Capitol avenue.*

The spring of 1857 opened auspiciously for Omaha in every respect. Real estate was held at as fancy figures as ever and was about as active as in the previous year. But in a short time, however, real estate began to get a little heavy and did not sell

* Omaha became "a city of the first-class" by legislative enactment February 9th, 1869. The city was divided into six wards, by ordinance, May 15, 1869.

quite as readily. But there was more building during the spring and early summer of 1857 than in any previous year since the founding of the city. A large number of good houses were erected, which are still standing.

The ever memorable financial break-down of that year commenced with the suspension of the Ohio Trust Company, which was followed by the failure of the Illinois banks and others all over the West. There were numerous "wild-cat" banks in the territory of Nebraska at that time, as there were elsewhere in the new West. Two or three of these banks were located at Omaha, and one or more at every little village through the river counties. The bank that did the largest business in Omaha and Nebraska was the Western Exchange Fire and Marine Insurance Company. L. R. Tuttle was the cashier, and A. U. Wyman, afterwards cashier of the Omaha National Bank, but now the treasurer of the United States, was the teller. Mr. Wyman has risen by his own exertions, step by step, to his present position, which is one of the highest and most responsible offices in the United States. The people of Omaha feel proud of his success, as he was "an old Omaha boy." His father was the late W. W. Wyman, one of the old settlers here, who, during his residence in Omaha, was one of her most prominent citizens. Mrs. Wyman, his widow, and mother of Mr. A. U. Wyman, is still a resident of Omaha.

The Bank of Nebraska, Samuel Moffat, cashier, was also located at Omaha.

The Western Exchange Fire and Marine Insurance Company failed in October, 1857, and nearly all the other banks in the Territory followed suit. Within a few months every Nebraska bank had closed its doors, with the exception of two or three. One of these banks that withstood the general pressure was called the Bank of Dakotah and was operated by Augustus Kountze, who is one of the

Kountze Bros., who now rank among the most prominent bankers in the country, doing business in New York, Omaha and Denver. This bank redeemed its entire circulation at par, which was considered quite a noteworthy circumstance at that time.

Of course the bursting of the speculative bubbles temporarily checked the rapid advancement that was being made by Omaha, and men who had been flush soon found themselves financially distressed. Business dragged heavily, the bottom was knocked out of real estate, and a general spirit of depression and despondency prevailed. It was so everywhere.

During the summer of this year the city of Omaha issued \$50,000 in city scrip for the purpose of completing the capitol, and when that amount was exhausted another \$50,000 was issued, making \$100,000 in all. This scrip passed current at par during the time it was being issued, and until the capitol building was enclosed and a few rooms were made ready for occupancy. After that this scrip gradually fell until the discount was greater than the sum for which it would pass. A large amount of this scrip was either lost or virtually repudiated; at least it was never redeemed except in the payment of taxes, for which some of it was used.

The financial depression continued through 1858, and in a still greater degree than ever. It is a fact that the population of the city decreased during 1858 and 1859, when it is said to have contained 4,000 people, and that it did not begin to increase again until 1860 and 1861.

The rich gold discoveries in Colorado now gave a stimulus to western travel, from which Omaha derived a substantial benefit from the time it began till it ceased, and it was this that gave her another start.

It was in 1858 that the first discovery of gold in Colorado was made by a small party of men on a stream which is now called

Cherry Creek, at a point where Denver was afterwards located. During the summer of 1858 there was considerable emigration to that region, and when enough men had gathered together they laid out a town and called it Auraria. Afterwards a town was built up on the opposite side of the creek and called Denver, in honor of the then Governor of Kansas.

In the spring of 1859 the emigration to Colorado greatly increased, and a large share of the travel and trade to and from the gold regions passed through Omaha, which gave a decidedly hopeful and cheerful turn to affairs. Business began looking up at once, and Omaha soon became an important outfitting and starting point. Hundreds of wagons arrived at Omaha from the East every day, and after taking a rest here for a short time to replenish their supplies and outfit in good shape, they would resume their journey, with the words "Pike's Peak or bust" painted on their white wagon covers. Omaha merchants kept their stores open night and day, and every day in the week, Sundays not excepted, being determined to make hay while the sun shone. Those were busy times, and our merchants coined money right along. This Colorado emigration lasted till 1864, and Omaha was greatly benefited thereby.

It was in the summer of 1859 that William N. Byers, having secured a printing office, a wagon and teams, left Omaha for Denver. On the side of his wagon he had painted the name of his contemplated newspaper, "The Rocky Mountain News," which he established at Denver. It has been the leading newspaper of Colorado from that time to this.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DOINGS OF THE CLAIM CLUB.

SQUATTER TITLES—THE FIRST NEBRASKA CLAIM MEETING—PASSAGE OF LAWS—OMAHA CLAIM CLUB—ARBITRARY AND OPPRESSIVE PROCEEDINGS—THE CASE OF DOC. SMITH—GRAND MASS MEETING OF THE CLUB—RESOLUTIONS—JACOB SHULL DRIVEN OFF HIS CLAIM AND HIS BUILDINGS BURNED—AN OBSTINATE IRISHMAN DUCKED IN THE RIVER THROUGH THE ICE—ILLUSTRATION—SENTENCE OF DEATH PASSED UPON ZIEGLER, WHO SAVES HIS LIFE BY YIELDING TO THE DEMANDS OF THE CLUB—MURPHY'S STORY—A MAN STRUNG UP TO A TREE, AND AFTERWARDS STARVED INTO SUBMISSION—DISSOLUTION OF THE CLAIM CLUBS—FIRST ENTRY AND FIRST PUBLIC SALE OF LAND, ETC.

THE early settlers of Omaha had no valid title to their lands upon which they had located or had staked out their claims. The title was still in the government of the United States, the land not then having been thrown upon the market. The only title the settlers had was what they called the "claim" or "squatter" title, and which they conveyed to each other by quit claim deeds. These titles were generally respected by everybody, and especially when the claimant had made valuable improvements on the land.

The "claim club" was one of the first institutions established here. It was gotten up by the settlers as a sort of higher law, and also for the purpose of giving themselves an advantage over

those who came here afterwards. It soon became evident to them that Omaha would, at some day, become a large and prosperous city, and they accordingly undertook to secure the lion's share of the plunder. Under the laws of the United States in force at that time, any settler could take one hundred and sixty acres of land, and by staying on it, he was in no danger of his title ever being disputed, though it was necessary for him to wait till the land came into market before he could acquire a full and valid title. The early settlers thought the limit of one hundred and sixty acres was a little slow and not extensive enough. They wanted to do better than that. So they formed themselves into a "Nebraska Claim Association," or, as it was soon afterwards better known, "The Omaha Claim Club," comprising all settlers in Omaha and Douglas county, which then included Sarpy county.

A "Nebraska Claim Meeting" was held at Omaha on the 22d day of July, 1854, almost immediately after the survey of the town site was completed. It was composed of a respectable number of the claimants of the public lands in the vicinity of Omaha, as the first number of the Omaha *Arrow*, July 28, informs us.

S. Lewis was called to the chair, and M. C. Gaylord was appointed temporary secretary. A complete code of laws was enacted providing for the manner of marking claims, and that no person could hold more than three hundred and twenty acres,* but that it could be in two parcels. No person could hold more than eighty acres of timber, but that also could be in two separate parcels.

Marking the claim and building a claim pen four rounds high in a conspicuous place would hold the claim for thirty days, at the expiration of which a house had to be built thereon. Transfers of claims were to be made by quit claim deeds. All differences were to be settled by arbitration.

* See Omaha *Arrow*, No. 1, July 28, 1854.

After the passage of these laws the association proceeded to the election of its officers, as provided for in the claim code, the result being as follows: A. D. Jones, Judge; S. Lewis, Clerk; M. C. Gaylord, Recorder; R. B. Whitted, Sheriff. So it will be seen that A. D. Jones was our first Judge, and fully entitled to the honorable prefix, although he is never called Judge now. New officers were elected from time to time, and these laws were slightly amended at different periods, forming the model for similar clubs which were organized all throughout the territory.

The Omaha Claim Club made a regulation that each member should hold against all claimants provided he made improvements on the land to the value of \$50 per year. Under this regulation all the land within five or ten miles of the city was gobbled up by the settlers, each one taking 320 acres.

Two or three years afterwards when new settlers began to arrive pretty fast, this regulation gave rise to a great deal of serious difficulty, and in some cases bloodshed resulted. The claim club was very arbitrary, and in some cases oppressive, in enforcing some of its regulations, and those of the "old settlers," who still reside here, do not like to say much about the matter. We will, however, mention a few well authenticated incidents of their action in respect to the adjustment of difficulties arising from disputed claims.

Mr. George Smith, better known as "Doc." Smith, the veteran surveyor of Douglas county, was one of the many victims of the wrath of the Omaha Claim Club. He had taken up a claim—in the vicinity of his present residence in the northern part of the city—on the 15th day of May, 1856, and by the 18th instant he had his house half completed, when an armed party of seventy-five or one hundred men, under the direction of the Omaha Claim Club, came up and in a few minutes leveled the building to the ground, and threatened to put an end to the existence of Mr. Smith, who saw it

was useless to resist against such overwhelming odds. He had retreated to a small clump of trees and bushes, where he held a brief consultation with the captain of the men, who advised him to leave at once. Mr. Smith acted on this advice, and going down under the bluff, he quickly departed and crossed the river to Iowa, going to Glenwood, where he remained most of that summer, occupying his time in cultivating a small piece of ground that he had there. He visited Omaha occasionally, but he made no attempt to recover his land. In the summer of 1857 Mr. Smith returned to Omaha, and soon after, early in 1858, employed a Washington lawyer, Richard M. Young, to present his case to the Commissioner of the General Land Office, Hon. Thomas A. Hendricks, who had replied in December, 1857, to the letter of the register and receiver of the land office at Omaha in reference to the matter, that as Smith was absent from the land claimed for more than one year; that as there was no evidence that he attempted to return and take possession of his claim, or that he resorted to legal proceedings to obtain possession or to protect himself, the General Land Office could not take the place of the local law, and its officers, to protect him; and further, that not having complied either with the letter or the spirit of the pre-emption law, his claim was rejected.

Young went at the case with a will, notwithstanding this adverse ruling of the Commissioner, and gathering all the facts and testimony, he presented the matter in a clear and convincing manner, and finally recovered Smith's land for him. Young had the facts and testimony of the case printed in pamphlet form, and distributed throughout Nebraska at the time, and we have now in possession a copy, from which we have gathered considerable information.

John A. Parker, who was register of the land office at the time Smith was driven off his land, was one of the main witnesses for Smith. In his affidavit he testified as follows:

"That he was present at Omaha in May, 1856, at which time the said George Smith had erected a house on the above mentioned land, and which was the only house or other improvement on said land; that soon after said house was erected on said land he saw a large and excited mob, fully armed, proceed to said house and pull the same down, and give notice to said Smith to leave the Territory immediately, *under pain of being placed in the river if he failed to do so*; that the said Smith did, in fact, leave.

"On or about the 1st of February, 1857, the land office opened at Omaha, and the 'Claim Association' held a meeting, and passed resolutions, that no man should be permitted to pre-empt land without the consent of said association; and a committee of vigilance was appointed to see that no person violated said resolution, and to punish and 'dispose of' all who did make any effort to comply with the laws of the United States. Some were summarily dealt with, and have not since been heard of. An effort was made to find Smith, for the purpose of making him abandon his claim, and it is within the personal knowledge of this affiant that threats were made, if he could be found and refused to comply, he should be hung; and this affiant has no doubt that said threats would have been executed.

"Some time in April the said Smith wrote to this affiant asking if he could, in his opinion, safely appear at his office to consummate his pre-emption. He replied, that he did not think he could do so, and any attempt on his part would forfeit his life.

"Again, in the summer, he was written to on the same subject; and he was then advised to come down to the office *at night*, and bring his witnesses with him, so that the facts should be sent to the Commissioner of the Land Office—all of which was done.

"During the whole period there was no bona fide settlement on said land, nor was there any such settlement up to the time said Smith came to the office. The only real claimant to the land was

Omaha, and it constituted a portion of the 3,500 acres which was set apart and claimed for the town, but constituted no part of the area entered, or built on, and occupied for town purposes. It does not appear that there was any laches on the part of Smith, nor was there any law in existence to which he could appeal to place him in possession of the land, (even if such a law could have been enforced against a mob.) The legislature, at its session of 1857, had repealed all civil and criminal laws, and had not substituted any others.

"This affiant is in doubt whether, at this time, the said Smith could safely enter on the land; but, if it is entrusted to him, he has no doubt he will make the effort.

(Signed)

JOHN A. PARKER,

Late Register Land Office, Omaha, N. T."

A grand mass meeting of the Omaha Claim Club was held in Pioneer Block on the 20th day of February, 1857. The meeting was called to order by the President, when it was announced that delegations were present from Bellevue, Florence, Elkhorn and Papillion, ready to offer aid and counsel of their respective districts, to assist the people of Omaha in the protection of their rights.

The delegations were admitted by acclamation, and a committee of five was appointed to draw up resolutions expressing the sentiments and intentions of the squatters. The resolutions were as follows:

"Whereas it appears that evil disposed persons are giving trouble, in different parts of this vicinity, in attempting to pre-empt the claims and parts of claims held by bona fide claimants, to the great annoyance of the rightful owners: Therefore,

"Resolved, That we have the fullest confidence in the power of the claim associations to protect the rights of the actual settler, and we pledge ourselves as men, and as members of the different claim associations in Douglas and Sarpy counties, to maintain the claim

title as the highest title known to our laws, and we will defend it with our lives.

"*Resolved*, That persons shielding themselves under the Act of Congress to pre-empt a man's farm under the color of law, shall be no excuse for the offender, *but will be treated by us as any other common thief*."

The resolutions were adopted by acclamation, and the captain of the regulators was authorized to select a vigilance committee to carry out the intention of the resolutions.

It was then ordered that the proceedings of this meeting be printed and posted in public places and published in the newspapers of the Territory, and the meeting then adjourned until Saturday, the 21st, when a committee was appointed to attend at the United States land office and warn settlers of any attempt to pre-empt their land. The captain of the regulators choose a secret vigilance committee and minute men were enrolled to execute the orders of the association in the speediest and most effectual manner, when the meeting adjourned.

It has been related to us that at a meeting of the Omaha Claim Club in Pioneer Block—very likely at the same meeting that we have just described—a well known man, now dead, in speaking of what should be the fate of those who threatened to prove up on a claim not their own, said, "Instead of letting them prove up we'll [*heck*] send them up," at the same time accompanying the remark with a noise as of a choking sensation, and with a gesture of the hand to indicate the sudden elevation of an object towards an overhanging limb. These gestures were especially significant as coming from one known to have been tried for the killing of a man. This incident may remind the reader whenever he hears the expression "we've got 'em *a-hecking*," that somebody has got somebody else in a tight place—choking the wind out of him, so to speak.

. On the 21st of February, 1857—the very next day after the holding of the “grand mass meeting”—the club began to carry out its resolutions, and rallying its members to the number of one hundred or one hundred and fifty men, all fully armed and equipped, they marched out in a body to the southwestern portion of the city, and forcibly dispossessed of his premises Jacob S. Shull, who had squatted on what he had rightfully supposed to be a piece of government land, and being a citizen of the United States he claimed the right to settle upon and improve it under the pre-emption laws.

Seeing this large body of men bearing down upon him, and knowing what they were coming for, he concluded that discretion was the better part of valor, and accordingly hurriedly retreated.

The claim club tore down and set fire to his buildings, destroying everything on the premises, and then began hunting for him. He lay concealed for two days behind a counter, in a dry goods store, and his hiding place, fortunately for him, was not discovered by his pursuers, although they searched nearly every building in town, the store in which he lay included. Finally after the excitement had somewhat subsided, he made his re-appearance, and was not any further molested as he kept very quiet. Of course he did not dare to openly assert any claim to the land after this occurrence. Mr. Shull did not live long after this event, dying inside of a year after his dispossession of the land. His death, it is said, was greatly owing to the treatment he had received at the hands of the claim club. His trouble bore heavily on his mind, and caused a general depression of his spirits. Upon his death-bed his last thoughts were of his property, and his last words, uttered to his son, Henry D. Shull, then a very young man or rather boy, were, “You [meaning the family] will get it some day,” and his prediction came true.

The party claiming the land under the club law, afterwards procured his title from government. The heirs of Mr. Shull, how-

ever, carried their case to the courts, and without any difficulty at all procured the title from the government for the 160 acres of land, and the last claimant was then ousted and "went about his business." The heirs still reside in this city, and are now enjoying the profits arising from the sale of the land in city lots, it having become quite valuable in the meantime.

Another case was that of an Irishman named Callahan, who had settled upon a piece of land in the western part of the city, in the vicinity of West Omaha. He, too, was dispossessed by the claim club; but he went back a few days afterwards, acting under the advice of some one who was not known, and took possession of the land again. Thereupon a committee of the club arrested him on the land and brought him before the club for the hearing of his case. It was an august and solemn assembly, and the trial was gone through with in accordance with the rules of the squatter law, the verdict being that he should renounce all claims to the land, or *be drowned in the Missouri river*. He was given thirty minutes to decide the vital question whether he would give up his claim or become bait for the fishes. He refused to relinquish the land. He was then led to the river where a hole was cut in the ice, the event transpiring in February or March, 1857. They ducked him into the hole, taking good care, however, not to let go of him, for if they had, he would have been swept under the ice by the strong current.

They soon took him out, stood him upon his feet, and asked him to renounce the land. As soon as he could spit the water out of his mouth, he emphatically declared that he would not. He was again ducked under the water, and a second time pulled out, still remaining obstinate. They gave him a third submersion, and he then finally agreed to yield to their demand, having become convinced that they meant business, and would soon vary the



AN OBSTINATE IRISHMAN DUCKED IN THE RIVER BY THE
CLAIM CLUB.

monotony of the transaction by letting go their hold. The half-drowned and half-frozen victim was brought up to the city to sign a document of relinquishment, but by the time they arrived at the appointed place, it was found that the man was not able to stand up, the cold bath and the exposure having been too much for him. Dr. McElwee, who died about a year afterwards, and Dr. Thrall were immediately summoned to attend to the case. The doctors took the patient into a warm room, stripped off his wet clothes, some of which were actually frozen stiff, wrapped him in dry blankets, and gave him three doses of whisky. This treatment, especially the stimulant, soon revived him, and he then signed the deed of relinquishment. The land was entered and sold to an innocent party, which ended the matter. Poor Callahan died a few years afterwards, his death being hastened, as it is said, by the ducking he had received.

At another time a meeting of the club was held in Pioneer Block, there being about one hundred members present. A man named Ziegler was arrested and brought before them on the very serious charge of having asserted claim to some piece of land belonging to some member of the club. The president put the usual question to him, "Guilty or not guilty?" He pleaded "not guilty," and stated defiantly that he claimed that land and proposed to stick to it. His trial occupied just ten minutes, and no time was wasted in any foolishness or red tape. The verdict was that he should relinquish all claim to the land, or be banished from the Territory, and in case he returned *to suffer death*. The president of the club with all the solemnity he could command, ordered him to stand up and receive his sentence, which was delivered in accordance with the squatter law in "such cases made and provided."

Ziegler was then escorted to the river by a committee and ordered to depart, which he proceeded to do without any further ceremony or a second bidding.

Ziegler came back a few weeks afterwards, but did not set up any more claims to the land, and he was not troubled again by the claim club.

It was on the 17th of July, 1857, that one Daniel Murphy entered at the land office in Omaha a fractional quarter of a section of land near the Platte River, about two miles west from Larimer Mills, in Sarpy county. The land so entered joined a piece owned by two other men, both of whom had taken advantage of the law, and had entered, under the pre-emption law of 1841, the full amount thus allowed. They wanted more, and to accomplish their end they asked the aid of the Omaha Claim Club. These two men wanted to purchase the land from Murphy, but he refused to sell. He was then inveigled into an office by them, and found himself in the presence of several persons, among whom was a lawyer. They demanded that Murphy should sell, but he still objected. Threatening language was used towards him, and it was insisted that he must surrender his certificate of entry. While they were thus parleying with him, Murphy, who saw he was in the enemy's camp, sprang through a window, while they were a little off their guard, and attempted to escape. But he was caught and brought back, after a fierce struggle in which his clothes were almost entirely torn off. One of his captors, as the story goes and as it has appeared in public print, pointed a revolver at his head, and another flourished a bowie-knife in close proximity to him. His clothes were searched for the certificate but could not be found, as Murphy had rolled it into a small ball and concealed it in his mouth. Being unable to find it, they then directed their lawyer, who was a notary public, to swear Murphy to the fact that the certificate was lost and destroyed, and Murphy, thinking it advisable under the circumstances, accordingly made such an oath, and also signed a deed conveying away his land for the consideration of \$1,000 as was expressed in the

instrument, but it is said that Murphy was handed only \$100. Murphy was then permitted to depart with the admonition that he must say nothing and leave town, and to this latter proposition he was also sworn. Murphy sought advice, but found to his sorrow that the power of the claim club was omnipotent and that he could not obtain relief. He went to work for a short time at day wages, but being threatened on various occasions, as he said he still claimed the land, he removed to Iowa, and thence to Missouri. He afterwards returned to Omaha about the year 1870, after the death of one of the other two claimants, and brought suit for the recovery of the land. It was said that this case was a "hatched up job," and we understand that it never came to trial; at least if it did, it resulted in nothing for the claimant.

The following story of the doings of the early claim clubs has appeared in print, and is another good illustration of how they managed affairs in those days: An Irishman had entered the claim of another at the land office, receiving therefor a certificate, and he was soon afterwards taken in hand by the club to which the first claimant of the land belonged. The man was knocked down, tied and put in a wagon which was driven under a big cottonwood tree; a rope was put around his neck and he was told to say his last prayers, for unless he would sign over his certificate he would be hung at once. The Irishman declined to either pray or sign over, and was instantly strung up. He was left dangling a moment, and was then cut down and restored to consciousness. Being still obstinate, he was again elevated, and a second time released from the unpleasant situation. He still refused to comply with the demands of the club. After a short consultation it was decided to lock the prisoner up, put a sentinel over him, and starve him into submission. The plan was carried into effect, and after the Irishman had stood it till he had suffered extreme torture from the want of food, he

sent for the leader of the club and told him he was ready to transfer the certificate which he had received at the land office, to the one who had first occupied the land, and also to sign a quit-claim deed. This being done the prisoner was released, and the supposition is that the first thing he did upon gaining his liberty was to take a square meal and wash it down with a big horn of good old Irish whisky.

Concerning the claim clubs we find the following interesting paragraph in Woolworth's "Nebraska in 1857:" "Where the land has not been surveyed, the United States law affords no protection to a squatter, against a jumper; that is, a person entering upon his claim and asserting a possessory right to it. To afford protection in these cases, the Territorial legislature passed an act, approved March 6th, 1855, relative to claims on the public lands, by which it is provided that the squatter may hold 320 acres by forming with his neighbors a club, which is required to make and record with the register of the county its regulations. By this act these clubs are invested with legislative powers for their neighborhoods. Their operation is this: A member of the club has fulfilled the requirements of the rules in staking out his claim, recording it, and improving it. A person steps in and claims it for himself. The matter is brought before the club and examined. If the second claimant, who is called a jumper, can not show that the first claimant has no right to hold the claim, under the regulations of the club, he is required within a certain period to withdraw his claim, *on penalty of expulsion from the Territory, or of death.* Such is the necessity of the case, that in any event in which he should not yield, the penalty is promptly enforced. Most clubs construe a person who is not a citizen of the Territory a settler, provided he has a tenant on the land. But few cases of extreme measures have arisen. These regulations afford pretty safe possession to the actual settler; although it

can be hardly doubted, that the law of the Territory conferring legislative authority on the clubs, is unconstitutional. Still public opinion is more than law."

The rules of these clubs were the only security of the settler prior to the land sales, and hence much can be said in their favor, notwithstanding there were some abuses—an inevitable result whenever men take the law into their own hands. Claim-jumping was considered the highest crime in those days—horse stealing coming next in importance. Claim clubs were a necessity as long as squatter titles existed, but as soon as government title to land could be obtained, there was no further use for such organizations, and accordingly the Omaha Claim Clubs, as well as all other similar associations in Nebraska, disbanded in 1857-58.

During the year 1856 the land in the Territory was surveyed by the government. The title of the land, the reader is reminded, was still vested in the government.

The first entry of land ever made in Nebraska was in March, 1857, in which month the river counties were thrown upon the market. The title could only be acquired from the government under the pre-emption law of 1841, which required a settlement on the land by the party making the entry. The only exception to this was in the case of cities and towns, which were entered under the municipal act of 1844. The pre-emption laws were very liberally construed. The parties who entered the land qualified themselves under the law by a residence of five days on the tract claimed; of late years, however, a six months' residence is required under the same law.

The first public sale of government lands to the highest bidder was made on the 5th of July, 1859. Up to this date no land had been offered in the market except in the river counties.

Col. A. R. Gilmore was the first receiver of the United States

land office at Omaha, and Col. J. A. Parker, was the first register.

The land covered by the site of Omaha was granted in two patents—one to John McCormick, dated May 1st, 1860, the land having been bid off by him at the public sale of July 5, 1859, acting as trustee, and the other to Jesse Lowe, Mayor, dated October 1, 1860, on the entry made March 17, 1857.

CHAPTER XVII.

PIONEER JUSTICE.

THE WAY THEY TREATED HORSE THIEVES IN THE EARLY DAYS AT OMAHA—TWO HORSE THIEVES HAVE THEIR HEADS SHAVED AND ARE PUBLICLY WHIPPED AT A LIBERTY POLE—ILLUSTRATION—TWO OTHERS ARE TAKEN BY A MOB FROM THE JAIL AND HUNG TO A TREE NEAR FLORENCE—ILLUSTRATION—THE HANGING OF BOUVE IN THE JAIL BY THE VIGILANTES FOR THE ROBBERY OF MRS. TAYLOR—THE DOINGS OF THE VIGILANTES.



In every new country the settlers frequently feel called on to mete out justice to offenders, in their own peculiar way, owing to the inefficiency of the laws and the "freshness" of the executives, if any there be. Pioneer justice is swift and although sometimes rather harsh it is generally administered impartially and correctly. No guilty man escapes through the law's delay or through the law's technicalities. As a sample of pioneer justice we will relate the following truthful tale. It was in the summer of 1856 that a couple of vagabonds stole two horses from the settlers in the vicinity of Omaha, who had been frequent losers by the operations of horse thieves. These two horses were sold by them to some Pawnee Indians near the Elkhorn, on the south side of the river, south of Fremont. One day soon afterwards the animals strayed back to Omaha and were recaptured by the owners. The Indians came after them, but of course could not get them again. They were questioned as to their claims to the animals, and replied that they

had bought them from white men. They were then told that the next time any white men offered to sell them horses to hold them as prisoners, and give information of the fact. Shortly afterwards the same two men made their appearance among the Pawnees and wanted to sell them some mules. The Indians, remembering that they had lost the horses which they had purchased from these men, and not forgetting the instructions they had received at Omaha, at once arrested the thieves and brought them into the city, delivering them up to the whites. There was no jail in town then in which to confine them, and if there had been the society was not sufficiently developed to punish crime in the usual manner. So the matter was talked over among the citizens and others, and the conclusion was arrived at that the thieves should have their heads shaved, and that each should receive thirty-nine lashes on the bare back, and that they should return to the Indians the amount received for the horses.

The crowd at once proceeded to carry out their "conclusion." A colored barber named Bill Lee, a Madagascar negro, was employed to shave their heads, and he did the work in a highly artistic manner. He shaved the right side of the head of one of the thieves and the left side of the head of the other.

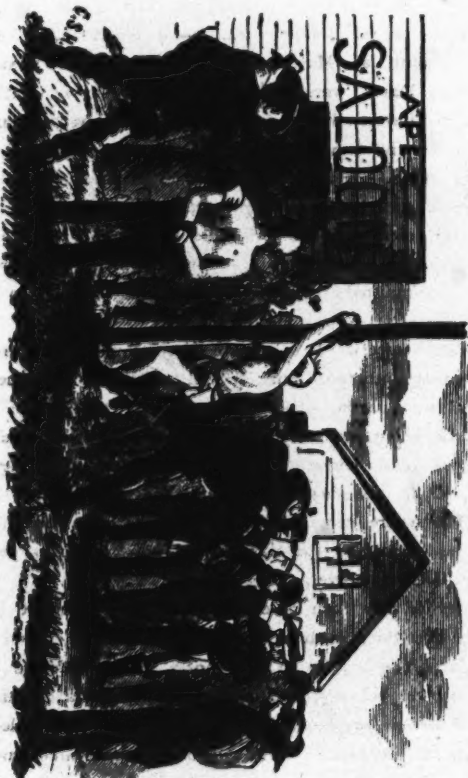
The prisoners were then led up to a liberty pole, which had been erected the year before on the then vacant block between Harney and Farnham and Twelfth and Thirteenth streets, in front of the old Apex saloon, which was kept by Charley Green and Dick Kimball, the latter of whom still resides in the city. The Douglas House, which was then the leading resort in the town, stood not far distant. One of the thieves was stripped to the hips and his hands tied to the liberty pole. A good heavy rawhide was brought out, and everything was then ready for the whipping. The performance, however, was somewhat delayed on account of there being no one who seemed willing to handle the rawhide.

During this delay the trembling wretch stood there waiting for his punishment. At last, however, it was suggested that the Indians should do the whipping. The Indians readily assented, and one of them started in rather too vigorously, so that he had to be checked. Another suggestion was then made that the owners of the horses that had been stolen should undertake the job, and they accordingly performed the whipping to the satisfaction of every one, especially the Indians, who seemed to greatly enjoy the scene, and they were the only ones who really appeared to relish the performance. The owner of one of the horses whipped the first thief, who counted each lash as it fell, and when the last stroke was applied, he yelled out, "That's all." The other thief was then led up and tied to the pole, and was whipped by the owner of the other horse. The names of the two men who did the whipping have passed out of the recollection of nearly everybody, but one old settler of Omaha informs us that they were Joe Gurnett, who is now in Montana, and Jesse Shbemaker, who is at present somewhere out west.

The citizens all regretted the affair, but regarded it as an unavoidable necessity, as there had been so much horse and cow stealing going on. Chief Justice Ferguson—whose son A. N. Ferguson is now a promising young lawyer of this city—was greatly opposed to this transaction from the very start, and did all in his power to stop it. He said it was all wrong, and that they had no business to take the law into their own hands. He directed B. P. Rankin, then United States Marshal, to disperse the mob, confine the prisoners, and give them a hearing.

Rankin, who did not think it advisable to act in opposition to the sentiment of the crowd, obeyed the order, but in such a manner that it had no effect whatever. He is said to have delivered the command of the Judge in a tone of voice little above a whisper. No one paid any attention to him. The whipping proceeded until the

TWO HORSE THIEVES PUBLICLY WHIPPED—THIRTY-NINE LASHES EACH.



full punishment had been inflicted, after which the victims were conducted to the river and allowed to depart. They never showed themselves in this vicinity again, and it is quite likely that they were effectually cured of horse stealing—in Nebraska, at least.

In the month of March, 1858, two men, one named Braden and the other Daley, were hung by a mob for horse stealing. These two fellows had stolen horses from some farmers at or near Florence, six miles north of Omaha. They had lost horses before, and could not recover them. After a long and determined chase they captured Braden and his companion, Daley, together with the stolen horses. They conveyed the prisoners to Omaha, where they were incarcerated in jail. They had a preliminary hearing before a magistrate, who committed them to jail in default of bail to await their trial.

A few days afterwards a small party of men early in the evening gathered around the Court House, which was approaching completion, and was partially occupied. One of them stepped into the sheriff's office, being the same room now occupied by County Treasurer Althaus, and without any demonstration or saying anything, walked to the further side of the room and took the key of the jail from the nail where it was hanging. He left the office before the sheriff's wife could give the alarm. She was the only person there, her husband, Cam Reeves, being absent.

The party of men then entered the jail, and took out Braden and Daley and tied them with a rope. Dumping the prisoners into a wagon, they drove rapidly to the north, being followed by a large crowd of men in vehicles, and on foot, who no doubt anticipated the result. The whole party proceeded to a point two miles north of Florence on the main road. The wagon stopped under an oak tree, from which a stout limb projected. A rope was thrown over this limb, allowing the ends to hang down. One end of the rope was

tied around Braden's neck, and the other around Daley's neck, the one rope being thus used to hang the two men. The wagon then started up, driving out from beneath the unlucky horse-thieves, who were thus left dangling in the air, with their backs to each other, or nearly so.



THE HANGING OF BRADEN AND DALEY BY A MOB FOR
HORSE STEALING.

The mob quickly dispersed after the hanging. The bodies of the victims remained suspended there till noon of the next day, and when they were cut down it was found that Braden, by some means or other—a matter of mystery by the way to everybody—had got the rope into his mouth, so that the noose did not pass around his neck. He had undoubtedly, just previously to his being launched into eternity, worked the rope up to his chin, thinking in all probability that he might thus save his life until the crowd had disappeared, when he might either be able to release himself, or some one might come to his assistance. When the wagon drove from under him the rope very likely was jerked from his chin into his mouth with very great force. But no one came to his rescue, and he was found as dead as his companion. The remains were conveyed to Omaha for the purpose of having an inquest held over them, and were placed in the same cell from which they had been taken alive on the previous evening. The next morning the bodies were found horribly mutilated by the rats. Byron Reed and John Logan, the then city marshal, were the first to make the sickening discovery. The public sentiment was very strong against the men, whoever they were, who had done the hanging.

A coroner's jury was empanelled, and Dr. George L. Miller was elected foreman, and Byron Reed was the clerk to take down the testimony. The inquest lasted two or three days. A great deal of feeling was manifested on the part of the farmers whose horses had been stolen, as well as on the part of the people throughout the country. It was even found necessary during the progress of the inquest to employ a number of deputies to assist the sheriff in bringing in obstinate witnesses before the jury. In one case it required the combined strength and exertions of four men to fetch in a certain witness who absolutely refused to say a word about the case. It was well-known that he was present when the men were hung. Some twenty

or thirty witnesses, who saw these men hung, were examined. They admitted the fact of being spectators, but said they had no hand in the affair, and did not know anybody who had. The coroner's jury failed to find out the leaders of the mob. Although they had their own suspicions, they could not substantiate them by any legal evidence. The result, however, was that four men were held for trial at the district court for participating to some extent in the mysterious affair. They were tried and acquitted, but not before they had taken a change of venue to Sarpy county. One of these men lives in Omaha at the present time, and another near Florence. It is a fact that this affair ruined every one of them, mentally and financially. They had previously been prosperous men, but after this trial they met with reverse after reverse, and have never since recovered.

The sheriff was afterwards indicted, tried and convicted of dereliction of duty in not preventing the hanging, and was fined several hundred dollars. Judge Ferguson was the Chief Justice at the time, and James G. Chapman the prosecuting attorney. The records of this case have all been lost.

Sometime in the spring of 1861 there came to the house of Mr. George T. Taylor, who then lived on the military road ten miles northwest of Omaha, where it crosses the Big Papillion, two men named Bouve and Iler, who were what might be termed professional tramps. There was no one at home except Mrs. Taylor, whom they assaulted and ordered to deliver up what money and valuables that there were in the house.

Mrs. Taylor, being a resolute woman, made objection to the proceeding, and attempted to scare them off, when Bouve seized her, threw her on the bed, tied her hands and otherwise, fastened her so that she could not move, and then struck her, but without inflicting any great injury. He then wanted to burn her up, but Iler prevented him by interfering and saying that he ought not to strike a woman

or hurt her, as all they wanted was money. Bouve said he didn't care for the consequences. They then robbed the house of money and other valuables, consisting mostly of silverware. Bouve was not satisfied with the plunder, and thinking that Mrs. Taylor had not revealed the whereabouts of all the valuables, he pointed a revolver at her, and would no doubt have shot her, had it not been for the second interference of Iler who said he didn't want any murder committed. The remarks of Iler in Mrs. Taylor's behalf afterwards saved his life. The thieves gathered up their plunder and came into Omaha.

Mr. Taylor returned home shortly afterwards, and upon learning the circumstances immediately came into Omaha and gave an account of the robbery.

Mr. Taylor next went before Major Armstrong, who was police judge and mayor of Omaha, and swore out a complaint against those old offenders *John Doe* and *Richard Roe*, as the real names were unknown. Thomas Riley, who is now a wholesale liquor merchant, was then city marshal, and a good officer he was too, during the three terms that he held that responsible office. In his hands the warrant of arrest was placed, and it was not long before he reported that he had discovered two men, whom he had not seen in town before, playing cards in a saloon under the Western Exchange Bank building, now occupied by Caldwell, Hamilton & Co. He had learned that they had first made their appearance here early that morning, and seemed rather free with their money. Riley was ordered to arrest them and bring them before the court, which he did without any unnecessary delay. The prisoners gave their names as James Bouve and John S. Iler, and said they had just come in from the west and were seeking employment as laborers. Judge Armstrong had them searched, and not being able to identify them as the perpetrators of the robbery, and after apologizing to them for the indig-

nity they had suffered, they were discharged. As soon as Bouve and Iler had retired Judge Armstrong suggested to Marshal Riley that he had better keep an eye on them so that he could find them in the morning. The Judge then sent Mr. Taylor home with directions to bring his wife and hired man to the city before noon of the next day. Next morning Marshal Riley was directed to re-arrest Bouve and Iler, on whom he had kept a strict watch. After their release they had gone back to the saloon under the Western Exchange building, and in a braggadocio style swore that they would "make the town ring," as they had plenty of money which they were expecting from friends in a day or two. When they left the saloon in the morning they were followed by Riley down to the river where he arrested them. They were no doubt intending to go to the spot, where they had buried their plunder. Marshal Riley brought the men before Judge Armstrong. Mrs. Taylor had arrived in the city by this time and had been placed in a back room by Judge Armstrong, unobserved by anybody. The court room was thronged with spectators, who were directed to arrange themselves against the sides of the room, and Bouve and Iler were placed among the crowd. Mrs. Taylor was then brought forth. Her presence created quite a sensation. She was a tall, slim, stately woman, past the meridian of life, her pale, intelligent face had a weird expression, and altogether she impressed the lookers-on with the fact that she was no ordinary woman and one that had evidently seen better days. The Judge stated to her why he had sent for her, and asked her if she would know the men who had robbed her if she should see them again. She sprang to her feet and striking a tragic attitude, screamed out, "Yes, I could tell them among ten thousand people!" She then began at the head of the line, looking steadfastly into the eyes of each man as she slowly passed along. Finally she stopped in front of Bouve, and exclaimed, "*You* are the man! I

know you even if you have shaved off your whiskers, for I never can forget those eyes!" This act of identification was a thrilling episode, and the crowd felt relieved from the suspense in which they had been held up to this time. Mrs. Taylor then walked along the line a few steps farther and halted in front of Iler, saying, "And you are the other man; you saved my life. It was you who said, 'Jim, don't shoot the old woman.'"

Both men were then committed to jail and put in separate cells. That night a committee of citizens visited Bouve and informed him that Iler had confessed. They did this in hopes to get Bouve to commit himself, but they did not succeed. They then tried the same game on Iler by telling him that Bouve had confessed. Thereupon Iler told everything and informed them where the money was hidden. The committee, accompanied by Marshal Riley, who took Iler along, then went to the place, on the bottoms near an old brick-yard north of the present location of the Union Pacific shops, and there by the aid of a lantern they found the money and other articles. Iler was then taken back to jail.

The next day a large meeting was held in front of Pioneer block. There were over five hundred men present, and among them the very best citizens of the town. It was decided to try Bouve and Iler then and there, by a jury of twelve good men. The jurymen were selected, and the trial proceeded in a room in Pioneer Block. Wm. A. Little, afterwards Chief Justice, and Robert A. Howard defended the prisoners, and pleaded eloquently for the law to be allowed to take its course. The jury found the men guilty of the offense charged, and the question was whether they should be turned over to the vigilance committee, with the recommendation that Iler should be treated leniently. The question was also put to the crowd outside, after they had been addressed *pro* and *con* by several eloquent speakers, and they voted in accordance with the verdict of the jury, that the vigil-

ance committee should dispose of the case. They voted by stepping across a dividing line," and when the crowd dispersed it was pretty generally understood that the vigilance committee would have a "neck-tie sociable" that very night. And so they did. At midnight they proceeded to the jail and overpowered Marshal Riley, who was in charge; and taking the keys from him, the crowd passed him outside over their heads. They then unlocked the door of Bouve's cell, and hung him to a beam in the hall, the tips of his toes actually touching the floor, so that the planks had to be taken up to let him have a free swing. The county was thus relieved of any further expense or trouble in the case. It is said that he died game, making no confession and cursing the crowd in the most bitter terms. He is reported to have killed several men in Colorado, being a gambler and a thief by profession, and a daring desperado.

A good story is told in connection with this event. The men all went there disguised, and unknown to each other. While they were looking for a place to hang Bouve from, a man who spoke through his nose—a defect known to everybody—exclaimed in his peculiar tone of voice, "Say, boys, here's a good beam to hang him on." Everybody recognized him at once, and the solemn scene was sandwiched with a general laughter for a minute or two. Bouve was hung from that very beam. In consideration of Her's efforts in behalf of Mrs. Taylor at the time of the robbery, and his confession, he was set free by the vigilantes, who directed him to leave the country. They nearly scared the life out of him by firing their revolvers after him as he rapidly disappeared out of sight in the darkness. He went as far as Bellevue and obtained employment in a saw-mill, but a few months after he enlisted in Captain W. G. Hollins' company of volunteers, served through the war and received an honorable discharge as sergeant.

This hanging affair, which was conducted by the best men of

Omaha, had a salutary effect on the vagabonds and desperadoes who then infested the city and vicinity, and they made themselves very scarce for a long time afterwards.

The vigilance committee had considerable work to perform during the early days of Omaha and they did it well and effectually. At one time the gamblers became very numerous and bold, and it was decided to rid the town of them. The vigilantes accordingly proceeded to the rooms of the gamblers at a late hour of the night, having their faces masked, and by the dim light of a lantern would make the victim get up and hand him a letter telling him to travel within the next twenty-four hours. They all stood with revolvers cocked, and in the dull light, masked as they were, they presented a hideous appearance. The victim of their wrath needed no second warning, but left the town in every case within the given time. Another hint to leave was the painting of a skull-and-cross-bones on the door of the gambler's room. One hint of this kind was sufficient. It was not long before the gamblers betook themselves to a more congenial clime.

In 1859 a young man was caught attempting to burglarize a jewelry store, and was handed over to the vigilance committee, who took him to the bluff just east of the Herndon House, and informed him that they were going to hang him. The fellow begged of one of the crowd, whom he knew, to "excuse him from hanging this time." Amid a shout of laughter, he was strung up to a tree, when some one cut the rope, allowing him to plunge into a snow-drift fifteen feet deep. When he emerged he was trying to loosen the rope around his neck. The vigilantes opened fire on him, and he took to his heels down the hill and over the river on the ice, never stopping till he reached Council Bluffs.

A man engaged in passing counterfeit money was nabbed by the vigilantes, who made every arrangement to hang him in a cellar on

Farnham street, when he confessed, implicating a Nebraska City man, who thereupon left the country. The sheriff "rescued" the man, by previous agreement, from the vigilantes, and put him in jail, from which he afterwards escaped with several other prisoners.

We have related only a few of the exploits of the vigilantes, but they are sufficient to illustrate their operations, which were always for the good of the community, and we have yet to hear of a case wherein they made a mistake.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FIRST LEGAL EXECUTIONS.

THE MURDER OF NEFF BY TATOR—ARREST, TRIAL, CONVICTION AND EXECUTION OF THE MURDERER—ILLUSTRATION—THE MURDER OF WOOLSEY D. HIGGINS BY OTTWAY G. BAKER—ARREST, TRIAL, CONVICTION AND EXECUTION OF BAKER.



SOMETIME in the month of June, 1863, a boy named Horace Wilson, employed by a Mr. Maxwell to gather drift-wood on the Missouri river bottoms north of the city, found the dead body of a man in the stream near the shore. He informed some men in camp near by, who came and took the body out of the water. The body was bound around the arms and neck with a log chain, and also around the legs with another. An inquest was held according to law by the coroner, and the body was identified as that of one Isaac H. Neff. It was evident that he had been most foully and cruelly murdered, and his body loaded down with log chains and thrown into the river. It was also ascertained in the course of a few days that Neff had recently come from Denver to Omaha with several unloaded teams, in company with one Cyrus H. Tator. The next discovery that was made was that two or three of Neff's empty wagons were found standing on the high ground above Sulphur Springs, where they had remained a week or two. A further investigation disclosed the fact that Tator had left Omaha with a load

of goods for Denver, a few days before, taking with him one of these wagons.

Thomas L. Sutton, the sheriff, then started to overtake him, which he did in Colfax county, where he arrested him on the charge of murder. He was brought back to Omaha, where the District Court was in session, Chief Justice Kellogg presiding. A special grand jury was immediately ordered, and he was indicted by them for the killing of Neff on the 17th of June. He was tried, convicted and sentenced to be hung.

Charles H. Brown, assisted by Judge Lake, who was then practicing law, appeared for the State, and Hon. A. J. Poppleton and William A. Little for the defense. The argument of Mr. Poppleton was a most brilliant, eloquent and logical effort—in fact, it is said by those who have known Mr. Poppleton for twenty years to have been the best speech to a jury that he ever made, and we believe that he himself so considered it then and is of the same opinion still.

The case was carried to the Supreme Court by the defense, and the decision of the court below was affirmed.

The object of the murder was robbery. It was supposed that Neff had considerable money on his person. After Tator killed Neff he sold the dead man's teams to Heber P. Kimball, then living at or near the Mormon town of Florence, but now a prominent man among the Mormons in Utah. Kimball was one of the most important witnesses against the defendant. Tator had also tried to sell the wagons, but failing in this, he left them where they were found.

The execution took place on Friday, August 28, 1863, it being the first legal execution that ever occurred in the Territory, although there had previously been several hangings by lynch law. There were about two thousand spectators present, among them being persons from all parts of the Territory and from western Iowa.

At the request of Sheriff Sutton, Gen. McKean detailed a guard of forty soldiers from Company C, 7th Iowa cavalry, who preserved the strictest order on the occasion.

Rev. T. B. Lemon, of the M. E. Church, administered the Holy Communion to the prisoner in his cell in the morning, and afforded him all the spiritual consolation in his power.

At 11 A. M. Sheriff Sutton brought the prisoner out from his cell, and assisted by City Marshal Thomas Riley, placed him in a buggy and drove to the place of execution, the military forming a hollow square about the vehicle. The road was lined with buggies, wagons, and people of all ages, sexes and colors, on horseback and on foot.

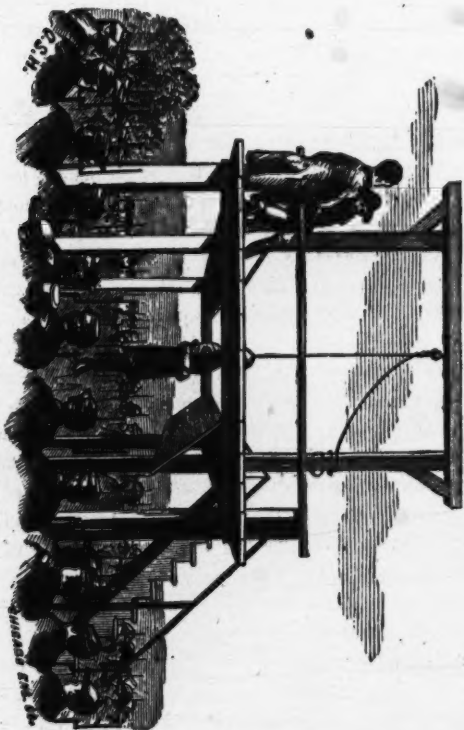
The place of execution was near Sulphur Springs, in the immediate vicinity of the spot where the murder was committed.

The scaffold was a plain frame, four beams erect, with a platform and trap door, with steps leading up to the platform. A short seat on each side of the platform, where were seated Rev. Mr. Lemon, the prisoner Tator, Sheriff Sutton and Marshal Riley.

The prisoner did not appear greatly depressed, but assumed a cheerful rather than a despondent look. In fact he was remarkably self-possessed for one under such dreadful circumstances. This self-possession which he had maintained all through his trial and imprisonment never deserted him, not even at the last moment.

The prisoner addressed the assembled multitude from the scaffold, from his manuscript, for about half an hour, reviewing the trial, the circumstances of his arrest, and maintaining his innocence. He read his address in a full, clear tone with some considerable emotion, but with scarcely any perceptible trembling. Among other things that he said was that he did not suppose so many people had assembled merely for the purpose of witnessing the suffering he was about to endure, but more to see and hear what he had to say on the occasion.

THE EXECUTION OF CYRUS H. TATOR.



After the conclusion of his address, a prayer was offered up by Rev. Mr. Lemon. Sheriff Sutton then placed the rope around the prisoner's neck, and assisted by Marshal Riley, tied his hands behind his back, drew the black cap over his head, pushed the lever and the trap door flew open, launching Cyrus H. Tator into eternity at exactly one o'clock P. M., August 28, 1863. He died almost without a struggle.

Tator was born in Chatham, Columbia county, New York, in 1833. He studied law in the office of Elijah Payne, in the city of Hudson, and was admitted to the bar when about twenty-two or twenty-three years of age. In 1856 he emigrated to Kansas, and was elected probate judge of Lykins county in 1857, was re-elected in 1859, and was afterwards a member of the Kansas legislature. He was generally called Judge Tator. In 1860 he went to Colorado, and from there he came to Omaha in company with the man he murdered. He left a wife, whose maiden name was Mary E. Bishop, to whom he was married in 1858, and by whom he had one child.

The second legal execution in Omaha was that of Ottway G. Baker for the murder of Woolsey D. Higgins. The murder, for which Baker paid the penalty with his life, was a most brutal butchery, and was committed on the night of the 21st of November, 1866, at the grocery store of Will R. King—a brick building at the southeast of Farnham and Twelfth streets, now occupied by express offices, &c. Higgins, who was a fine young man and well liked by everybody, was the book-keeper and Baker was the porter. They slept together in the store. Higgins in the afternoon, after banking hours, had received about \$1,500 in currency, and had put it in the safe, the keys of which he always carried. Baker was aware of the fact that he had received this money, and resolved to obtain possession of it, which he could not very well do without killing Higgins. The two men retired as usual, Baker going to bed about half

past eight, and Higgins some time afterwards. At the dead hour of night Baker awoke, crept softly out of bed, and procuring an axe, he returned to the bedside and dealt the sleeping Higgins two terrible blows, which caused instant death. Baker then went to the safe, and with the keys unlocked it, taking out the money. Putting on his clothes he went out of the back door, and placing the money in an old tin can, he hid it under the sidewalk on the west side of Eleventh street, between Harney and Howard streets. He then returned to the store, and descended to the cellar where he fired the building by putting some boards up against the floor, and saturating some rags with coal oil. After applying the match he went to the back door and stood there with his pistol in his hand until the fire had burned through the floor and the smoke had filled the room. His intention was to utterly destroy all trace of the terrible crime which he had committed. The fire was discovered by an outside party, and the alarm given to the fire department, which then consisted of only one hand engine and the hook and ladder company. At about the same time Baker fired a shot into his own arm, to make it appear as if some one had entered the store, murdered Higgins and attacked him, and throwing the pistol away, he also gave the alarm, by running out of the back door yelling, "fire! murder! thieves!" During the progress of the fire the revolver went off several times, it having become heated by the flames. The fire was extinguished, and the murdered Higgins was found in his bed. Baker immediately invented a rather plausible story. He said he had been awakened by the smoke coming into the room, and that he had got up and run to the cellar door, as the fire appeared to be in the basement, and there he had met some one who fired at him, wounding him in the arm, and that he then ran out on the street and gave the alarm.

His story was regarded rather thin, as there were many suspicious

circumstances which pointed directly to him as the perpetrator of the deed, and he was taken into custody next morning. One thing that led to his arrest more than anything else, was the finding of a lot of matches scattered all over the bed. It was thought that this was done by the murderer to cause the bed to burn the more rapidly when it would take fire; but the matches being on the bed was a pure accident, as was shown in his confession. It appears that the matches were knocked off from a shelf on to the bed by the stream of water from the engine. At the examination before the coroner's jury it was clearly demonstrated from the manner of the wound, that no one but himself could have fired the shot which hit him in the arm. He was held to await the action of the grand jury, who indicted him for the murder. He was tried and convicted. Hon. G. W. Doane, the then District Attorney, and Hon. John I. Redick, now Associate Justice of New Mexico, appeared for the State, and Col. Savage, Ben. Sheiks, Mr. Hopkins, and Mr. Parks, for the defendant. The case was taken to the Supreme Court, who overruled the motion for a new trial, and decided that the sentence of death should be executed. Up to this time—considerably over a year after his arrest—there were some few persons who believed him innocent; but upon learning that his fate was irrevocably fixed, he sent for his spiritual adviser, Father Egan, of the Catholic Church, to whom he made a confession and told where the money was hid. Father Egan, accompanied by Col. Savage and John DeLaney, accordingly proceeded to the spot and there found the money. Baker also confessed that he had about a month before the murder set fire to the wooden buildings at the southwest corner of Farnham and Thirteenth streets. The fire burning from the corner up to Samuel Burns' brick building.

Baker was hung on St. Valentine's day, February 14th, 1868, about a quarter of a mile west of Capitol Square. The execution

was superintended by Sheriff Hoel, Deputy Sheriff Seymour and Father Egan, and was witnessed by about 8,000 people, 500 of whom were women.

The young lady to whom Higgins was engaged, Miss Lizzie Herd, a very pretty girl, was so overcome at her lover's tragic death that she died within six months after its occurrence.

The following is the principal portion of Baker's confession, which was dated January 28, 1868:

"It is not my intention to conceal anything connected with this heinous crime, though, as the details of the circumstances connected with it will only serve to open again the yet bleeding wounds of Mr. Higgins and his family, I did not intend at first to make them known. Mr. Doane, in his theory, came very near the facts in the case. I first planned this horrible crime in the old store, but was prevented from executing it by God's mercy until that night; not that there was not money enough—on several occasions there was more. I went to bed that night about half-past eight; what time Higgins came to bed I do not know. When I waked, I got out as easily as possible, went all round the center tier of boxes to get on the south side of Higgins, came up, made one or two offers [efforts], and was on the point of giving it up, when the devil put it into my head that Higgins had only been shamming sleep, and would tell all that I had done. This gave me the heart to commit the crime. I struck the first blow. He drew a long breath. I thought he was on the point of hallooing. I gave him another; then went to the safe, got the money, put on my clothes, went out of the back door down to where the money was found, leaving the back door open till I came back. I pulled off my clothes; went into the cellar, set fire to the building by setting some boards up against the floor, took the oil can, put some coal oil in some old rags, set fire to them and then went up stairs. I then went to the back

door, and stood there with the pistol in my hand until the fire burned through the floor and the smoke had filled the room. Then I fired the shot which wounded my arm, then gave the alarm, and threw the pistol away; but the devil always looks out for his own. He carried it to the fire. I ran out of the back door, hallooing fire! murder! thieves! The first man who came up had on a gray overcoat. At this time I was at the corner of Farnam and Twelfth streets. There I threw away my hat. The man went to the engine house to ring the bell. I ran backwards and forwards two or three times there; when three or four men got there, I burst in the west side door; went in, got my boots, threw one large case of tobacco out of the doorway, and then put on my boots. By this time there were six or seven men there; then two shots went off. I got away from the door, but the other two shots did not go off for some time, perhaps two minutes. That was all the shots which I heard, and it was all that was fired, in my belief. When the crowd got there with the engine, the west side doors were closed. This was some more of the devil's work. Now, when the engine began to play, the fire had got upon the swinging shelf; the water was now thrown upon the matches, which went tumbling down on the bed. This was not the work of the devil; it was God's hand which threw the matches down to show the devil that he might help the guilty, but God was the one who administered justice. The fact of the matches being scattered all over the bed, led to my arrest, but they found [formed] no part of my plan. The lamp burner was an old one which had been saved from the old store. There was only one fire kindled; that was done so as to cause the floor to break in there, so that the body would be crushed by the weight of the goods. It was not my intention to burn the whole store. There were only five shots fired to my knowledge, one before the alarm and four after. There was no

noise to my knowledge in the store that night; if there was, it was while Mr. Beale was there with Higgins: if they made any, it did not awaken me. After I had my arm dressed, I went back to the front of the store. Dr. Peabody said to me, 'If I had a friend in there, I would go in in spite of anybody.' Then I broke open the front door, the one with the lock on it. I broke the glass out, pulled back the bolts and went in, but could not go back a great ways for fear the floor would give way. I dressed and undressed before I gave the alarm; then put on my boots after there were three or four men there. I alone am guilty; let me pay the penalty of the crime. I should have had to implicate others who are innocent had I got a new trial.

"With regard to the two previous fires, I desire to state that I set the new store on fire to prevent W. R. King from moving in so soon. I did not stop there over five minutes after I had done it, for fear I should be missed from the store; then I got back to the old store without either Mr. Nave or Higgins knowing that I had been out, and went to bed. Afterwards I set fire to Hellman's warehouse to draw Higgins' attention, and besides to prevent any deposits from being made on that day. When this fire was discovered I was at the new store at work, and had been there about twenty minutes. I did not start at the first, but waited till there was quite a crowd; then I had no idea it would do so much damage as it did.

"Mr. Donovan has been a sufferer by me also on two different occasions. I went into his shop when he kept on Fourteenth street, and on each occasion took two pairs of boots, amounting in all to about forty dollars more or less.

"I must now return my sincere thanks to Judge Lake for his leniency towards me all through the trial. Mr. Doane will also accept my thanks for the feeling manner in which he prosecuted me.

"Mr. Redick, I freely forgive you for the way in which you made your plea in this case.

"I must not forget my own counsel, for they have labored with the utmost faithfulness ever since I have been incarcerated to obtain testimony and counsel for me. I return my heartfelt thanks for the same. I am also thankful to Mr. Hopkins; also Mr. Parks, who exerted himself in my defense with his able talent. Mr. Morris has not only given me legal advice, but has done me many personal favors. Col. Savage has all the thanks imaginable for the able manner in which he has conducted my case, since he has become connected with it. May he never again whilst a member of this bar have so unworthy a client.

"I have never let any one into my confidence until after the Supreme Court was in session, so that neither one or the other of my counsel knew whether I was guilty or innocent. I thank the community for their leniency towards me. Had this been in any other part of the State of Nebraska, besides Omaha, I should never have had any trial; but thank God, the law has had its course, and I have had a fair and impartial trial.

* * * * *

"I desire also in this connection to thank all those who would place religious instruction within my reach, but I believe only in the Catholic Church, and wish to die in her communion, as it was their instruction alone that brought peace and hope to my soul.

O. G. BAKER."

CHAPTER XIX.

FLORENCE.

THE MORMONS—ORGANIZATION OF THE FLORENCE TOWN COMPANY—
THE FINANCIAL CRASH—CLAIM CLUBS—A LIVELY ELECTION AND
CELEBRATION—THE ADJOURNED SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE AT
FLORENCE, AND OTHER INCIDENTS.



HISTORY of Omaha would be incomplete without some reference to Florence, where the Mormons stopped in 1846, and remained there for some years, during which time the place was called Winter Quarters. It has already been mentioned that they were ordered off the land by the Indian agent, to whom the Indians had complained of them for cutting timber, and many re-crossed the river and lived among the ravines in the bluffs on the Iowa shore, and also at Council Bluffs. When they had determined to emigrate to Utah, they started nearly all their trains for Salt Lake from Florence, up to about the year 1865, which made Florence a lively place and a busy outfitting point. Many of our Omaha merchants took advantage of this state of affairs to establish branch stores there, reaping quite a benefit therefrom.

In 1856 the Florence Town Company was organized, the banking house of Cook, Sargent & Parker, of Davenport, Iowa, being heavily interested in it.

It was expected that the Mississippi & Missouri railpad, now the Chicago & Rock Island, would cross the Missouri river there, the

first survey having been made down the Pigeon Valley in 1854; but the road never got there.

In consequence of the energetic efforts made by Cook, Sargent & Parker, in the interest of Florence, the town, which had been chartered as a city in 1856, kept on growing very rapidly until the fall and winter of 1857-58, when Cook, Sargent & Parker went down, as did nearly every other banking house in the country during that memorable financial crisis, and then the town began to go backward.

A claim club had been organized there, and acted in the same manner as did similar clubs in the early days of the Territory.

Among the people of Florence the Germans were very numerous, and in 1856 and 1857 they had a theatre in full operation, and went so far as to attempt the representation of Schiller's "Robbers."

On the 4th of July, 1857, one Biggs, a blacksmith, stabbed and killed a man named Kingsley, the latter having been too intimate with Biggs' wife. Biggs gave himself up to Dr. Heath, then city mayor, who turned Biggs over to the sheriff at Omaha. The sheriff allowed Biggs to take a swim in the river, and he crossed over to the Iowa shore, and has never been heard of from that day to this.

In August, 1857, an election was held in the Territory, at which election Florence gave Fenner Ferguson, who was running for delegate to Congress, 700 votes. When the news came that Ferguson had been elected over Thayer and other candidates, a grand jubilee was held at Florence. An iron cannon, which was brought out and fired, exploded, killing Dr. Hardcastle, who had served in the Mexican war.

In the winter of 1857-58 a singing society and a brass band were organized. A newspaper, called *The Courier*, was published there, but it could not have been in a very flourishing condition, for a ball was given in its behalf, by which \$40 was realized.

During the same winter the legislature at Omaha broke up in a big row, and adjourned to Florence, and there held its session in two adjoining stores, formerly occupied by Baugh and Heath & Græter. Over the rear doors of these stores were painted the words, "Terms Cash," which, it is said, scared away many applicants for bridge, ferry, and other charters.

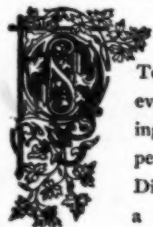
These two buildings were afterwards removed to Omaha and were occupied by Dewey & Stone, the furniture dealers, till last year, when they tore them down and erected in their place the largest brick business building in Omaha.

Since 1858 Florence has gradually receded, until it is now a very small place, but a very pleasant suburb of Omaha.

CHAPTER XX.

THE PAWNEE WAR.

AN INDIAN SCARE—THE MILITIA CALLED OUT—A BRIEF BUT GLORIOUS CAMPAIGN—ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.



MAHA bore a prominent part in that episode of our Territorial history known as the "Pawnee War," which event occurred in the summer of 1859, and the following chapter of the history of that "war" is from the pen of Mr. John T. Bell, official phonographer of the District Court. At the time of its occurrence he was a mere boy, but nevertheless he took part in the campaign, and his recollection of the affair being yet fresh, he is enabled to present the facts in a reliable and entertaining manner.

The Pawnee Indians then occupied two villages about twelve miles directly south of Fontenelle, and on the south side of the Platte. They had behaved themselves very well, considering that their depredations consisted chiefly in robbing hen roosts and picking up little odds and ends of personal effects belonging to the whites, and the settlers had concluded there was no danger whatever to be apprehended from them, but in this they were doomed to disappointment.

In the latter part of June, 1859, the entire tribe of Pawnees—braves, squaws, papposes and dogs—left their villages and marched across the low land intervening between the Platte and the Elkhorn on the western side of the latter stream just across from Fontenelle.

Here they remained a day or two; after which short delay, they proceeded up the Elkhorn, without crossing it, pursuing a northwesterly direction. They said they were going up the river on a grand buffalo hunt, and would be gone several "moons." On the day after they left their first camp on the Elkhorn, half a dozen "bucks" crossed the river at a point about a dozen miles above Fontenelle, and attacked an old bachelor by the name of Uriah Thomas, who was living alone in a little log hut some distance from any other house. The Indians took his pocket-book, containing \$136, a package of valuable papers, including several land warrants, drank up all his whisky (the unkindest cut of all) and then drove off a fine yoke of oxen, after first having taken the precaution to lock Mr. Thomas up in his shanty. After the Indians had been gone for some time, Thomas set about effecting his release, which he accomplished with but little difficulty, and then cautiously proceeded to Fontenelle and gave the alarm. Of course, the wildest excitement prevailed. A company of a dozen men or so was immediately organized, and an advance was made upon the Thomas mansion, after a careful reconnoitering by scouts. No Indians were discovered, and the party concealed themselves in and about the hut, and waited patiently for several hours; but no Indians making their appearance, the whites returned to Fontenelle. Two days afterwards, the people living at West Point and DeWitt came down to Fontenelle in a body, and reported that as the Pawnees moved up the river, on the western side of it, marauding bands had crossed over to the eastern side, and had burned the dwellings of the settlers, ripped up their feather beds, scattered the contents, and used the ticks for blankets; tore to pieces clocks for the purpose of getting the brass rings to hang in their ears, and drove off all kinds of stock.

This was a fine state of affairs. Thirty men, armed with rifles, shot-guns, muskets, and revolvers, started for West Point the next

morning in wagons, reaching that settlement about the middle of the afternoon. They saw no Indians that day, and after deliberating over the matter, concluded to return to Fontenelle the next day, but concluded before doing so to send a portion of the party to DeWitt, some six miles up the Elkhorn. As this detachment was on the point of returning to West Point to rejoin the others, having met no redskins, a scout came in with the information that he had seen a small body of Indians crossing the river a mile or so distant. Arrangements were instantly made to capture the party. A portion of the white men took position in one room of Mr. Moore's double log house, while the rest kept themselves out of sight. The people of the house were instructed to admit the Indians into the unoccupied room of the house, and after they were all in the room, the outside door was to be securely fastened, then the middle door between the rooms was to be opened; the white men were to rush from the room in which they were concealed into that occupied by the Indians, and then their capture would be a very easy matter—as they thought. It was a very neat little plan, and looked well, but it didn't result as well as it was expected. The Indians, eleven in number, approached the house; they were invited to walk in, which invitation was accepted, as it was evidently their intention to walk in whether they were invited or not; the outside door to the room was closed and fastened; the signal was given; the door between the two rooms was opened; the white men rushed with a yell into the room which was occupied by the Indians—and, captured the whole posse? Not much. The greasy-skinned, slippery devils shed their blankets, dived down among the legs of the white men, slipped out like so many eels, burst open the door and were out of the room like a flash, and all the white men had to show for their stratagem was the lodgement of a slug in the wrist of one of their own number—Mr. James H. Peters—which

was brought about by the accidental discharge of a gun during the melee in the room. The Indians were followed out of the house by the whites who blazed away at them as they ran toward the river. Two or three of the Indians were killed and one wounded; one was captured, having been brought down "on the wing" by a shot which should have been better aimed.

The whites then hastily got their wagons together, put the wounded Indian in one of them, and started back to Fontenelle, being very anxious to vacate that particular section of the country before the Indians who had made their escape from the house should reach the Pawnee camps, and tell the tribe of the fracas. The whites "stood not upon the order of their going, but went at once," rattling over the level prairie road at a decidedly rapid pace. They had not proceeded far before the wounded Indian gave evidence of being dead. He was closely examined by those in the wagon, who agreed unanimously that he was defunct—that he would never again smash up a brass clock for the purpose of getting the wheels to hang in his ears, nor rip up a feather bed in order to get a substitute for a blanket. He was a goner, and as it would not pay to haul dead Indians, the wagon was driven to the bank of the Elkhorn, near which the road ran, and the corpse was picked up and pitched into the river. As soon as the supposed-to-be-dead Indian struck the water, he dived down and swam under water for the opposite bank, and it was then discovered that he had been playing "possum," and that he was better than a dozen dead men yet. But even an Indian cannot stay under water all the time; he must come up to breathe, and when that red rascal's head broke the surface of the stream, as he came up to get a whiff of air, a load of buckshot was deposited in the back portion of his cranium by a white man who never could appreciate a practical joke, and had but a poor opinion of jokers, whether white, black, or red. The buckshot was evidently too heavy a load for the

Indian to carry conveniently, for he never reached the other side of the river alive.

It did not take many days for the news with regard to the killing of the Indians at West Point to be carried to every part of the Territory, and the entire country was in a blaze of excitement. It was generally thought that the Pawnees would at once declare war against the whites, and the outlying settlements were supposed to be in danger of immediate extermination. Governor Black issued orders to the few militia companies then organized, to hold themselves in readiness to move at a moment's notice, and muskets were shipped to the different settlements, with orders for the immediate organization of other companies. The settlers along the Elkhorn river flocked to Fontenelle, which village was turned into a military camp. The growing crops were neglected, and suffered much damage thereby. Pickets were thrown out during the day, and a cordon of sentinels surrounded the place at night. All the ammunition was collected together, and pewter teapots, teaspoons, etc., were moulded into bullets. Blunderbusses which had done good service in patriot hands during the revolutionary war, and which had not been loaded nor cleaned since, were dragged forth and burnished up. Old sabres which had figured prominently on "muster days" celebrated by the forefathers of the present owners, were produced, and measures adopted for the purpose of inducing them to leave their scabbards from which they had not been drawn for years. It was reported every day for a week that ten thousand Indians were approaching the town fully attired in the traditional war paint and feathers, and in consequence of these cheerful stories the people were constantly kept in a pleasant state of exciting suspense. At night each bush or shrub would be transformed into a stealthily approaching redskin.

A week of this sort of life drifted by, and no attack had been made. By this time a force of about two hundred men had gathered in

and about Fontenelle, and it was then resolved by the officials of the Territory that it would be a fine stroke of policy to cross the Elkhorn, follow the trail of the Indians until they were overtaken, and then and there attack them and administer a lesson which they would not soon forget. A sufficient number of wagons were provided with the necessary camp equipage and a large amount of provisions (several barrels of whisky being included in the latter), and on the 5th day of July the force moved across the river, and went into camp on Maple creek, a few miles from Fontenelle. Gov. Black accompanied the expedition, of which he was the commander-in-chief, though the battalion was under the command of Colonel—since Major General—Thayer, which gentleman had served in the Mexican difficulty, and was consequently supposed, by a credulous public, to be thoroughly conversant with the art of war.

Omaha was represented in the expedition by a gun squad, commanded by Capt. James Ford (who became a general during the war), and of which most of the young men of the city were members. Among those who went out as members of this organization and otherwise were Capt. Ford, Hobart Ford, Si De Forest, Bob Howard, U. S. Marshal West, George and Ed Hepburn, Gen. Estabrook, George Armstrong—mounted on his famous bob-tailed black trotter—Charles Woolworth, A. S. Paddock, James G. Chapman, Cam. Reeves, John McConihe, Dr. Henry, Maj. J. H. Croft, W. J. Kennedy. Dr. J. H. Peck accompanied the "army" as surgeon, driving in a single buggy his chestnut-sorrel "Mack," which horse is still in his possession and frisky as a colt.

Our mounted force always rode at the head of the columns, preceded by a few scouts, a considerable distance in advance. The sun beat down upon us with terrible force, and the sandy stretches of country over which we passed, at intervals, threw out an immense amount of heat. Our horses were very poor and weak, and the ex-

cessive heat together with the heavy loads, soon began to tell on them, and consequently the progress made was very slow indeed. We had no roads, as the country had not yet been surveyed, and no settlements had been made. We struck the trail of the Indians and followed it steadily, over hills, through valleys, and across streams, which last named were always miry. Here we would generally be delayed somewhat, as a bridge of some description was required before we could get the wagons across. A force would be set to work to cut brush, while another would mow down the heavy slough grass. The brush would be thrown into the stream, the grass piled on the brush, and then if the banks were very steep, the horses would be unhitched from the wagons, which would be let down by ropes, and then drawn up the opposite banks by the teams which had been previously taken across. Notwithstanding the many difficulties encountered, we usually traveled as far in one day as the Indians we were pursuing would march in three, it being an easy matter to locate the places where they had camped each night, these encampments being about seven miles apart. The utmost precaution against surprise was observed when, at the close of a long, tedious day, a convenient spot for a camp would be selected, the wagons corralled, and the animals turned out to graze. At an early hour in the night, sentinels would be posted all around the camp, and relieved every two hours. After about a week's travel, during which we had not seen a human being, excepting those of our own party, we came one evening upon a single Indian lodge. We knew that we could not be very far behind the Indians, as the last few camps we had passed gave unmistakable signs of having been but recently vacated, and when this lodge was discovered, it was surrounded at once, and found to be occupied by "Jim Dick," an under chief among the Omahas, who told us that the Pawnees had been joined by the Omaha and Ponca tribes, and that with this increase of their numbers, there were

at least 5,000 Indians in the party we were in pursuit of, and that they would encamp that night about seven or eight miles farther on, having occupied the camp at which we found Jim Dick's lodge, the night previous, he having laid over one day's tramp on account of his squaw being sick. This somewhat startling news called forth a hurried consultation. Five thousand Indians could utterly annihilate our force of two hundred undisciplined and poorly armed men, provided the Indians were disposed to fight. Jim Dick told us that the Omahas would not join the Pawnees as they wished to remain at peace with the whites, but it was impossible to say what the Poncas would do. It was finally determined to go forward. The Omaha and his squaw were compelled to go with us under guard, in order to prevent the news of our approach being conveyed to the Indians, in camp.

It was nearly night when we came upon the lodge, and we proceeded but a mile or so before going into camp. Arrangements were made to start out as silently as possible, at three o'clock the next morning. After supper had been disposed of, the cooking utensils and camp equipage were re-loaded, and everything made ready for a start as soon as the signal should be given. The arms were put in as good condition as possible; bullets were moulded, and each man was instructed with regard to his duties. It was a misty moon-light night. The camp was near the banks of the Elkhorn, whose waters, rising in the far off Black Hills, at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, rippled past with a monotonous sound. Occasionally the sharp cry of the coyote would be heard, as he wandered forth on a marauding expedition, or the hoot of the owl would break suddenly on the night air. The sentinels paced up and down through the tall grass, watching with vigilant eye and prepared to give notice at the earliest approach of danger. The tired animals nipped the rich grass, which abounded in the greatest profusion,

keeping close to the wagons, as they always do when away from the settlements, evidently being taught by instinct that their safety depends upon keeping close to their masters. Orders were given for the fires to be extinguished at an early hour, and the men gathered about the wagons in little groups, and talked in low tones of what the coming day would bring forth. There was but little sleeping among us that night, but few jokes, and no boisterous laughter. It will be seen at a glance that the situation was not particularly exhilarating nor inspiring. We were a hundred miles or so out from the settlements, shut off from all chance of reinforcement. We were in pursuit of, and expected to attack the Pawnee tribe, numbering 3,500 in all, and this tribe we found on coming up with it, to be reinforced by nearly as many more, so that if they were all "on the fight," there would be at least 2,000 braves for us to attack, and we were then within a few miles of that body of Indians who were quietly encamped and resting in blissful ignorance of our proximity.

At three o'clock in the morning the camp was aroused, and in a very short time we were on the move. Orders were issued in a low tone as we passed rapidly along. The trail ran near the river bottom, on the table-land adjoining, and we met with no obstacles whatever until daylight, when we came to a small stream which ran out from the bluffs and into the river. The scouts approached this stream carefully, for it was thought the Indian camp could not be far away. The creek was skirted with timber, which shielded our approach; and when the stream was reached, the Indian camp was seen on the opposite side, near where it ran into the river. A large extent of ground was covered by the lodges, and here and there Indians were to be seen gliding about, entirely unconscious of our approach. In a very few moments, however, we were discovered, and the camp vanished like magic, and in an incredible short space of time the wide river bottom stretching out before us was swarming

with redskins, some mounted, some on foot, but all striving, shouting and yelling, to make their escape. They leveled their lodges to the ground, but did not attempt to take them away; they thought only to save themselves. The Omahas did not run, neither did they strike their tents, but remained in them knowing they had no reason to fear the whites. Our mounted force crossed the river at once and followed up the flying Indians, but some time was lost in getting the wagons across the miry stream. Finally the entire force, wagons and all, were safely landed on the other side of the creek, and moved up the river at once. The tall slough grass through which we passed concealed a good many of the weaker ones among the Indians, who, finding themselves unable to keep up with the others, had dropped down in the rank grass, hoping to be passed by. On either side of us could be heard the yells and cries of pap-poooses, who had been thrown away by the frightened squaws, in their endeavors to "travel light." Small dogs, pet badgers, wolves and the like had been left by their masters to shift for themselves, and they added their voices to the noise and confusion. It was a lively time. The sun had just risen, and was tipping the tops of the hills and the trees along the river with golden splendor. In a very short time not an Indian was to be seen, where but half an hour before hundreds and thousands had swarmed. They had taken shelter among the willows on the river bank, and in the breaks along the bluffs on either side of it.

But they did not escape us. An under chief of the Pawnees, a fat old codger, who was trying to get away on foot, was overtaken by a horseman who shot at him and missed him, but just as he had secured a better aim for a second attempt, the Indian threw up his hands and surrendered. He was told to call his tribe together for a parley immediately, or he would be murdered in cold blood. The Indian was very glad of this chance for saving his life, and he at

once set up a series of terrific yells, in answer to which one redskin would show himself at this place, another at that, and then after an interchange of yells and calls, the Indians gradually approached our prisoner, who explained to them that a parley with the "Chemokee man" was of the utmost importance at that particular juncture.

By this time our scattered forces had collected together; the wagons were corralled; a line of battle formed, with the six-pound brass piece in front of it, and the horsemen on the flanks. When the Indians, who were lurking about, discovered the full strength, or weakness rather, of the force they had been running from, they left their hiding places and approached us quite readily. They were ordered to keep at a respectful distance in front, and only the chiefs were allowed to come to the wagons. The Indian force constantly received additions to its numbers, and before an hour had passed, we were confronted by about 2,000 redskins. The Pawnee chiefs were told that they could have their choice—give up the braves who had been engaged in the robbing and burning about West Point (for it was found that but a small party had had a hand in those depredations); pay the expenses of the expedition out of certain moneys due them from the government, or—fight us. One of the chiefs, a black, scowling fellow, with a sort of sheep-thief look about him, wanted to fight us. He said that he had two hundred and fifty braves, and he knew he could clean us out, but the older and wiser heads of the tribe had been to Washington—that moral city of which we are all so proud; they had held big pow-wows with the Great Father; they had gained a somewhat correct idea of the number of whites, and of the power and majesty of the nation which we, with our single brass gun represented; and last but not least, those old coveys had a very distant recollection of that exploit of Gen. Harney at Ash Hollow, and they begged of that blood-thirsty, belligerent young devil to "abate the ardor of his wrath," "for," said these old

sages, "if you do kill off this pusillanimous looking crowd of pale-faces, you have not gained anything, for the Great Father at Washington will soon hear of it and he will send out more soldiers than there are sands on the Elkhorn, and we will be wiped from the face of the earth."

It was finally arranged, after several hours had been occupied in the discussion of the matter, that the terms proposed by us would be acceded to, and then began a hunt for the Indians who had been making trouble back in the settlements. By the middle of the afternoon we had seven young fellows tied behind our wagons, and we were moving off toward a suitable place to encamp for the night. Each of the head chiefs had attached his "sign manual" to a portentous looking document which set forth in the most grandiloquent terms the fact that the individuals whose crosses were thereunto attached, regretted exceedingly the depredations which had been committed by certain unruly and headstrong young men of the Pawnee tribe of Indians, and that they, the undersigned, authorized the keeping back from certain moneys due the tribe from the government; a sufficient amount to defray the expenses of the expedition, and the signers further agreed that they would make no effort to release the seven young men who had been turned over to our tender mercies, no matter what we chose to do with them.

When the young Indians were given up to us, a squaw belonging to one of them, insisted on being allowed to go with her brave, and when this request was denied, she screamed and cried, tore the hair out of her head by great handfulls, threw her arms around the young fellow's neck, and gave way to the most violent grief. She was dragged away from him with great difficulty, and we then proceeded on our way, traveling but a few miles before going into camp. One of the prisoners seemed to be suffering a great deal from some cause, and upon one of our doctors making an examina-

tion, it was found he had been shot through the body, and that the wound was mortifying. He was one of the party of eleven who had been shut up in the room at West Point, and as he ran off, after getting away from the house, he had been shot by one of the whites, but was not so seriously injured but that he was able to reach the Pawnee camp, since which time his wound had been getting more and more painful each day. The doctor said he would not live to reach the settlements, and he was therefore set free and told to go back to his tribe. He was found the next morning a short distance from camp, dead.

We enjoyed a happy, easy time the afternoon and night after the conference with the Indians, naturally supposing that all danger was now past, and that we could return home at once. It was arranged that we should proceed up the Elkhorn a few miles farther, then travel in a southerly direction until we should strike the head of Beaver Creek, then go down that stream to its intersection with the Loup Fork, following the Loup until we should come to the Platte, and then keep along the Platte until we reached the settlements. We had a beautiful camp that night. Huge cottonwood, walnut and elm trees spread their branches over our heads. A noisy little stream rippled at our feet, and the ground was covered with a rich green carpet of Nature's weaving. Our minds were free from care or the apprehension of danger for the first time in many days, and we thoroughly enjoyed our pleasant surroundings. In due time a supper of black coffee, fat bacon, molasses, and a certain kind of hot bread, peculiar to the plains, was prepared and eaten with a relish. It requires the stomach of an ostrich, or a very healthy man, to digest it, and it would kill the oldest man in America in three weeks' time if he should eat it and follow sedentary pursuits. The usual way of preparing bread on the plains is to mix up batter and bake "flap-jack." It is expected that after a man has been on the plains a week, he

will be able to "flop" a slap-jack over in a frying pan, when one side is done, without the aid of a knife, and when he has been out a month, he is supposed to be able to take hold of the frying pan handle, throw the half-done slap-jack over a covered wagon, run around to the other side with his frying pan, and catch the descending mass, dough side down. The old hands allow a beginner just a month in which to acquire this accomplishment, and if he is unable to go through with it without doubling the slap-jack up in the pan when he catches it, at the end of that time, he is considered a discouraging failure.

As we said before, we were happy. As the sun sank to rest, and the twinkling stars came out one by one, and the moon rose bright and clear, our camp presented a beautiful picture. A chain of sentinels surrounded it, but they were not so anxious or watchful as they necessarily were when upon guard previous to our coming up with the Indians. The song and jest passed around, and the hours slipped pleasantly by until it was time to "turn in." Then blankets were spread under the wagons, and as the moon looked down upon us, lighting up the scene with a mellow haze, we dropped off to sleep with the music of rippling waters and the chirp of thousands of crickets, hidden in the grass, sounding in our ears.

We were roused up at an early hour the next morning, and in a short time our cavalcade was on the move. After marching a few miles we reached a high point of ground, from which a magnificent and picturesque scene burst upon the view. Far off to the northwest we could trace the windings of the Elkhorn by the timber upon its banks, while here and there could be seen small streams which found their way from the highlands across the broad river bottoms. At our feet was seen the Indian camp, now a scene of active commotion, for they had just discovered our approach, and were rapidly gathering their herds of ponies from the neighboring

hills. It was a mutual surprise. We supposed the Indians would remain the night previous at the place where the pow-wow was held, and they probably thought we had turned back that morning, intending to go home by the route we had come.

We were in for it now. We wanted to go in a direction which would bring us very near the Indian camp, and if they were disposed to fight us, we would gain nothing by turning aside now. It was decided that we should get everything ready to repel an attack, move along as though the Indians were not there, and trust to fate for the rest. Our six prisoners were tied together and then fastened by a rope to one of the wagons, behind which they walked quietly along, surrounded by a mounted guard. We did not go through the camp, but passed along one side of it. A few squaws and papooses came out to see us as we moved along, but the Indians generally remained about their tents. Among the squaws who had come out from the camp, was the one previously mentioned as having torn her hair and exhibited such great grief at being separated from her brave the day before, and when the wagon, behind which the prisoners were tied, came up, this squaw rushed among them and gave her Indian a knife, with which he stabbed himself in the breast, and fell heavily to the ground. Of course the wagon stopped at once, and the attention of the guards was taken up with the wounded Indian, whom they supposed to be bleeding internally, as but little blood was to be seen about the wounds, although a reddish looking substance, similar to blood in appearance, oozed from each corner of his mouth. As the guards were doing what they could to assist the Indian who had stabbed himself, his treacherous squaw secured the knife and cut the ropes which bound the prisoners together, and away they sprang like a flash, all the guards but one running after them, firing upon them as they ran. Meanwhile, the wounded Indian had stretched out, his eyes sunk into his head,

and he gave every indication of being dead, while that squaw of his hung over him, indulging in wild expressions of grief. When she saw that the guards were some distance from the wagon, she gave her buck the signal, and he jumped to his feet as agile as a cat, and started to run. But he did not get far. One guard had remained to keep an eye on the corpse, and when that corpse attempted to run away, contrary to the customs and habits of corpses generally, the guard drew up his rifle and called, "halt!" The Indian halted, and it was then found that the wound which he had inflicted upon himself was only skin-deep, and that he had red ochre in his mouth, by means of which he had created the impression that blood was oozing from between his lips. He was immediately recaptured, tied behind the wagon, and the procession moved on.

We proceeded about a mile, took up position on a high hill, and then stopped for a consultation. The guards who pursued the escaped prisoners had returned to the command, and reported that they had either killed or wounded all the prisoners except the one which had been recaptured. This was well enough, but in the excitement of the chase they had popped over one of the Omahas (down among whose tents the prisoners ran), and had also killed an Omaha pony. The indications just at that time were that we had cut out more work for ourselves than we could get through with conveniently. It was reasonable to suppose that the Pawnees had been thoroughly roused by the occurrences of the last half hour, and if the Poncas and the Omahas would join them, it was quite probable that they would "go back" on the agreement of the previous day. The Omahas had acted very fairly thus far, utterly refusing to have anything to do with the trouble into which the Pawnees had brought themselves, as they considered it "none of their funeral," but it was a difficult matter to decide what they would do now, since one of their braves had been wounded and a pony killed. We were on a high hill, about a mile

from the Indian camp, with no chance to get wood or water, and it would be a very easy matter for us to be surrounded and starved to death. The prospect was somewhat gloomy and discouraging.

While we were deliberating over the matter, we saw a procession of Indians leave the Omaha camp and approach us, "with stately step and slow," which procession proved to be composed of fifty of the wise heads among the Omahas. They marched in single file without a sound being heard, and as they slowly approached us we could see that their minds were filled with serious thoughts. They were decorated in a peculiar manner, their costumes indicating that they were prepared either for war or peace, as circumstances might seem to dictate.

But they didn't fight us. Our cheek and our extraordinary conversational powers saved us for a second time. We reasoned with those chiefs; we talked as we had never talked before. We portrayed in brilliant and glowing colors the evils which would result to the red-skins generally in case the Omahas and the Poncas joined with the Pawnees in declaring war against us. We dwelt especially upon the immense resources possessed by the whites; of their great facilities for carrying on a prolonged and bloody warfare. We deprecated the accidental shooting of the Omaha, promising to hang the man who had fired the unfortunate shot. We made mention of the fact that the Omahas had been at peace with us ever since the first settlement of the Territory. We had regular details made to talk to those old chaps who had one side of their villainous looking countenances painted red and the other black, and as soon as one detail of men could be exhausted, another took their place, and we outwinded them. Their desire for war gradually cooled, (nothing could withstand the avalanche of talk that we hurled at their devoted heads,) and they finally agreed that if we would leave medicines for the wounded Indians, and pay for the pony we had

killed, they would let us alone. To this condition we assented cheerfully, and as the Poncas had signified their intention to do as the Omahas decided to do in the matter, the Pawnees concluded that they would not fight us alone. We left a horse for the Indian whose pony had been killed, and we were allowed to move on. We did not camp very early that night. Every mile that we traveled, put that much distance between us and the Indians, and we were seized with a desire to make that as great as possible before stopping for the night. We were not at all afraid to encamp in their immediate vicinity, but it occurred to us that perhaps in view of all the facts it would be better if we were some distance from the Indian camp that night. We thought they would like it better.

Soon after leaving the scene of our conference, we struck Beaver Creek, and followed along its course. We traveled late that night and did not go into camp until near midnight. Keeping along Beaver Creek, we came in due time to its intersection with the Loup Fork, at the then Mormon settlement of Genoa. Here we were cordially received by the Mormons, who looked upon us as a band of brave and noble men who had sacrificed home and home comforts for the nonce, going forth with our lives in our hands to do battle in defence of the unprotected settlements, and shield them from the devastating torch of the savage.

Leaving the Mormon camp—in a manner becoming a band of heroes—we journeyed down the Loup Fork, and reached the German town of Columbus that night, at which place we went into camp. We also indulged in a high old time—we felt that the Indians were now safe from any murderous designs which we may have harbored against them, and we rejoiced to know it. We left one company of our command at Columbus, it having been organized there, and after leaving that village, our force decreased very rapidly. We were formally disbanded at Columbus, the different companies being allowed

to return to the various settlements from whence they came by the nearest and most practicable routes. We were told that each company commander would receive the pay due his company, and that the members of the company would be paid by him. It was supposed that the government would enforce the contract we had made with the Indians, keep back enough funds to pay the expenses of the expedition, and that we would receive the money which was due us. But the government recoiled on us, paid the Indians all that was coming to them, and we were left to whistle for our pay. We are whistling yet.

Thus ended the Pawnee war.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BIG INDIAN SCARE OF 1864.

A SERIOUS DISASTER THAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED TO OMAHA—THE SETTLERS ON THE ELKHORN BECOMING FRIGHTENED FLOCK INTO OMAHA—BUSINESS ENTIRELY SUSPENDED—THE CITY UNDER GUARD—ORGANIZATION OF THE MILITIA—THE SCOUT OF CAPT. TAFKE'S COMPANY—THE CAMPAIGN OF CAPT. JOHN R. PORTER'S COMPANY—THEY HAVE A FIGHT OR TWO ON THE FRONTIER AND DO GOOD SERVICE—CAPT. CHILD'S ARTILLERY COMPANY.



IN 1864 a very widespread and serious Indian scare occurred in the Territory, and it was not entirely without foundation. It was shortly after the destruction of Lawrence, Kansas, by Quantrell's band, that several persons in Omaha received anonymous letters warning them of a similar attack, and some little uneasiness was thus caused in the city. It appears that a considerable amount of money and valuables had been sent to Omaha from the southern part of the Territory for safe-keeping, and the banks at that time held more than the usual amount of money. There was a well-grounded fear that the city would be attacked by robbers or guerrillas disguised as Indians. When the attention of the citizens was called to this fact, it became evident to them that it would indeed be an easy exploit, even in 1864, for an armed body of 100 or 150 men to approach within twenty miles of the city without the least resistance and without anyone being aware of their coming. They

could march up from the southwest through a country where there was not a single settler for hundreds of miles.

Several bands of Sioux and other northern Indians had been in the habit of roaming at will through sections of the Territory, and particularly through that portion now known as Saunders county.

About that time a large band of Indians appeared on the western side of the Elkhorn river in the vicinity of where Waterloo and Valley Stations are now located on the Union Pacific railroad, and although they did not at first commit any outrage, or do any damage or violence to the white people, still the settlers in that neighborhood felt so uneasy and afraid of them, that they fled to Omaha as fast as their own limbs or the legs of their horses could carry them.

As soon as they had gone, the Indians appropriated their cattle and horses, and everything else of any value, but did no violence or murder.

When the settlers came flocking into Omaha one morning, between two and three o'clock, in the latter part of August, 1864, it caused the most intense excitement. Business was entirely suspended that day. A meeting was called at the Court House at two o'clock in the afternoon, and before sunset, it was safe to say, every able bodied man in the city was fully armed, equipped and prepared for anything that might occur.

A strong guard was organized and stationed that night at all the approaches to the city, and this vigilance was continued for about two weeks.

It is a fact that quite a number of the citizens of Omaha became so frightened that they went over to Council Bluffs where they remained till the scare had subsided.

The precautions that were taken, no doubt, prevented an attack on the city either from bushwhackers or from Indians. Our authority for this statement is a gentleman who is one of the oldest

settlers, as well as one of the leading and most respected citizens of Omaha. He has always been of that opinion, for soon after Quantrell's raid in Kansas, he accidentally met in Omaha a man who was a member of Quantrell's band. He had known this man for a long time, and during the civil war he was little better than a highwayman. There were two others of Quantrell's men in Omaha at the same time. The trio were evidently looking over the ground preparatory to raiding the city.

Roving bands of Indians were committing depredations and murders in the Platte Valley. Men were found killed at Thirty-two-mile Creek, Lone Tree, and Plum Creek, and other places in Nebraska, especially along the overland mail and stage route. Stock was driven off along the Ft. Kearney and Atchison mail route, and the pickets were fired upon at Ft. Kearney. A wagon train had been destroyed at Plum Creek, and thirteen men killed. It was a fact that in many instances the Indians were commanded by white men, disguised as savages. This is easily explained by the fact that the civil war was then in progress, and these white savages were undoubtedly rebel emissaries. It was not strange, then, that in the face of all these circumstance, a general uprising of the Indians who infested Western Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado and Utah, should have been feared at that time. It was thus that the Indian and guerrilla scare of 1864 originated.

Gov. Alvin Saunders made a call for the militia for self protection and to put a stop to the Indian outrages, and in accordance with that call his adjutant-general, W. H. S. Hughes, issued a special order for two regiments of mounted infantry, each regiment to be composed of six companies of sixty-four men each—one of the regiments to be raised south of the Platte and the other north of the Platte. The commanding officers of all North Platte companies were to report to Brig.-Gen. O. P. Hurford, of Omaha, and those

of the South Platte companies to Col. O. P. Mason, of Nebraska City. The term of service was four months.

Adjutant-General Hughes, next order, No. 4, dated August 22, 1864, by order of the commander-in-chief, Gov. Saunders, commanded that all able bodied men in the Territory between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, who did not belong to some militia company, meeting regularly for drill, should enroll themselves and form companies in accordance with the laws of the Territory.

Under the four months' call of Gov. Saunders, seven companies were organized, among them being the following at Omaha:

Company A.—R. T. Beall, captain; George C. Yates, 1st lieutenant; J. H. Barlow, 2d lieutenant.

Company B.—John Taffe, captain; Edwin Patrick, 1st lieutenant; Abraham Deyo, 2d lieutenant.

Company C.—Charles S. Goodrich, captain; Martin Dunham, 1st lieutenant; David T. Mount, 2d lieutenant.

Company D.—Jesse Lowe, captain; E. Estabrook, 1st lieutenant; O. B. Selden, 2d lieutenant.

A gun squad was also organized and officered by E. P. Child, captain, and A. J. Simpson, 1st lieutenant.

These companies were more of a home guard than anything else. Company D. was called the "gray-beard company," on account of its being almost entirely composed of old men. These companies were organized during the latter part of August. The *Republican* of August 26, 1864, says: "Organization is progressing satisfactorily, and we shall soon be in fighting trim. The city is now safe, and we can resist any attack which can be made upon it by the Indians or guerrillas."

The *Republican* of the same date notices the departure of Capt. Taffe's company as follows: "Captain Taffe's company of cavalry started west Wednesday afternoon, provided with five days' rations.

They go direct to Junction Island, near Forest City, and after reconnoitering in that vicinity will pass up the Elkhorn and return home."

On Monday night, August 23, it had been reported in Omaha that two hundred head of cattle belonging to Mr. E. Creighton and Mr. E. Loveland, were driven off by the Indians from an island where they were being herded, only twenty miles from Omaha, and that a large number of hostiles were on the south side of the Platte river in the vicinity of Forest City.

It was on the morning of this day that the frightened settlers—about twenty families—came into Omaha.

Capt. Taffe's company of fifty mounted men left Omaha on Wednesday evening, August 23d, reaching Forest City on Thursday. It was there learned that the cattle reported to have been driven off by the Sioux, had been stampeded by the Omahas, on the return from their annual hunt, and that most of the cattle had been recovered, no hostile Indians having been engaged in the affair.

Capt. Taffe then proceeded with his command up the Elkhorn, and made a through reconnaissance for several miles in the direction of Elkhorn City. Nothing was learned of any hostile Indians, and becoming satisfied that the alarm was the result of a mistake, for which nobody was really to blame, Capt. Taffe returned to the city, arriving on September 1st. This expedition demonstrated the fact that no hostile Indians had made their appearance on the north side of the Platte. This quieted all apprehension of an attack of Indians on Omaha, and most of the settlers returned home. The fear of a raid on Omaha by guerrillas was still entertained, however, and strict vigilance was maintained for some little time. The home guards were drilled every day from four to six o'clock in the afternoon, and all stores, shops, workshops and places of business generally were closed during those hours. Captains Taffe, Goodrich and Beall

were ordered to attend to the enrollment of all persons subject to military duty.

Capt. Beall was ordered to take command of all the militia forces within the limits of the city, and to keep the city under guard at night. All this was done by command of Brigadier-General O. P. Hurford, commanding 1st Nebraska Militia.

About this time Gen. Curtis, who was conducting the Indian campaign, made a call on Governor Saunders for mounted men, and in accordance with this request a company of volunteer cavalry was raised in Omaha, principally through the efforts of John R. Porter, now police judge. He had been drilling his company of "home guards" every Saturday, and being considered a thorough military tactician, he was elected captain of the cavalry company. One A. T. Riley was elected first lieutenant, and Martin Dunham, second lieutenant, the latter of whom, it is said, did some good shooting and splendid fighting during that brief campaign.

The cavalry men were without horses, but this important necessity was supplied by the late Col. Hayes, father-in-law of Judge Lake, who organized a press-gang for the purpose of pressing into the service the requisite number of steeds. They made a pretty clean sweep of the city stables, taking every horse that they found, as well as saddles and bridles, wherever there was any to be had. An order was also issued by command of Brig.-Gen. Mitchell that no horses should be crossed to the Iowa side of the river by the Ferry Company as it was feared that some persons might transport their animals out of the reach of the press-gang, whose operations entailed considerable hardship upon some persons. People living out of the city, farmers and others, would not come into town for some time afterwards except with bull teams, leaving their horses at home for fear of seizure.

Elder Shinn had a very fine horse, and when Col. Hayes said

to his men, "Take him, boys," the Elder put his hand in his pocket and remarked, "Colonel, *you* had better come and take him." Col. Hayes didn't take that horse. "Come on boys," said he, and they rode off to the stable of some other man.

The deficiency in bridles and saddles was supplied by the government quartermaster stationed at Omaha, who also furnished blankets. The horses and accoutrements were turned over to the cavalrymen, who were thus pretty well equipped. After being sworn into the United States Service, and inspected by Major Armstrong, they left Omaha fifty-two strong sometime in September, and scoured the country north and south as far west as Kearney and Julesburg, and other points along the stage line, over which travel had been temporarily suspended.

The Omaha cavalrymen had several little skirmishes and one real good fight, which took place at Plum Creek, where the Indians had burned a train of fourteen wagons a short time previously, and killed the emigrants, who had afterwards been buried by some of the whites. Captain Porter's company had run a party of Pawnees to this point, occasionally picking them off one at a time. They finally cornered them and killed fourteen of them. They also took three captives, who were brought to Omaha and delivered to Gen. Mitchell. No one recollects what became of them, but it is very likely that they were soon released.

At another time they corraled old Two-Face and his band near Alkali, and in crossing the Platte river to reach them the Omaha men came very nearly losing several of their horses. Just as they were about to charge them, a white man stepped out from among the Indians and raised a flag of truce. He presented a passport of protection and freedom, a sort of letter of credit, from Gen. Mitchell, saying that they should be allowed to proceed unmolested by anyone to Cottonwood, down the river. Captain Porter respected the

letter, and allowed them to depart, notwithstanding the opposition of his troopers, who wanted to clean them out. The Indians did not go to Cottonwood, but switched off by Ash Hollow and went up near Ft. Laramie, where the late Col. William Baumer was commanding. Col. Baumer took Two-Face prisoner, and being a hostile as well as a renegade and a thief, hung him in chains. Two-Face was a hard character and his fate was no doubt deservied. He had several white children whom he had captured.

This company also did valuable service in escorting supply trains and stage-coaches from Julesburg east to Ft. Kearney.

The cavalymen arrived at Ft. Kearney the 1st of November, and from there they came home.

The Nebraska First was then coming up from the South and also the Iowa Seventh, and these two regiments relieved all the volunteers along the stage road and on the frontier.

Capt. E. P. Childs also raised an artillery company of volunteers and went to Ft. Kearney, where he did some military duty with his command. We believe that Judge Mason also raised a volunteer company at Nebraska City.

CHAPTER XXII.

OMAHA AND NEBRASKA IN THE WAR.

THE FIRST NEBRASKA VOLUNTEERS—THE FIRST NEBRASKA VETERAN CAVALRY—THE CURTIS HORSE CONSOLIDATED WITH THE FIFTH IOWA CALVARY—THE MILITIA—THE OMAHA BARRACKS—MILITARY HEADQUARTERS.



WHEN the civil war broke out and the call for volunteers was made, Omaha was not behind her sister cities in offering her best men to fight for the Union, beneath the Stars and Stripes—the flag that had waved for nearly an hundred years. Those were exciting days all over the land, and Omaha and Nebraska shared the enthusiasm that prevailed everywhere.

Hon. John M. Thayer, who became a Major-General and afterwards United States Senator, and now Governor of Wyoming, applied to Governor Saunders and received his commission as Colonel of the First Regiment of Nebraska Volunteers, which regiment was mainly organized in this city and left for the field of action in July, 1861, with the following officers:

John M. Thayer, of Omaha, colonel; H. P. Downs, of Nebraska City, lieutenant-colonel; Wm. McCord, of Plattsmouth, major; S. A. Strickland, of Bellevue, adjutant; Enos Lowe, of Omaha, surgeon; William McClelland, of Omaha, assistant surgeon; T. W. Tipton, of Brownville, chaplain; George Spencer, sutler.

Captains—Company A., R. R. Livingstone, of Plattsmouth; Com-

pany B., Wm. Baumer, of Omaha; Company C., J. D. N. Thompson; Company D., Allen Blacker; Company E., Wm. G. Hollins, of Omaha; Company F., Thomas M. Bowen; Company G., John McConihe; Company H., George T. Kennedy; Company I., Jacob Butler; Company K., Joseph W. Paddock.

The first battalion of the Second Regiment of Nebraska Volunteers (cavalry) was mustered at Omaha, about the 1st of November, 1862, for nine months' service, and George Armstrong, of this city, was commissioned as major and commanded and superintended the organization of the regiment until ten companies were mustered in, when Wm. F. Sapp was commissioned lieutenant-colonel. About the first of February, 1863, the twelfth company completed the regiment and it was mustered into the service of the United States and officered as follows:

R. W. Furnas, of Brownville, colonel; W. F. Sapp, of Omaha, lieutenant-colonel; John Taffe, of Dakota City, and John W. Pearman, of Nebraska City, majors; Dr. Aurelius Bowen, of Nebraska City, and Dr. W. S. Latta, of Plattsmouth, surgeons; H. M. Atkinson, of Brownville, adjutant,

This regiment, enlisted for nine months and designed for home service, was mustered out in September, 1863, and on the recommendation of several of its officers and by leave of the Secretary of War, George Armstrong was commissioned by Gov. Saunders to raise an independent battalion of cavalry to serve during the war, and the following year the "First Battalion of Nebraska Veteran Cavalry" was mustered in and George Armstrong, Captain of Company A, was commissioned as major commanding.

This battalion was afterwards consolidated with the "Old Nebraska First," which had returned from the South and been transformed into a cavalry regiment, and on the 10th day of July, 1865, the new organization, thus consolidated, was known as the "First

Regiment of Nebraska Veteran Cavalry." One year afterwards this regiment was finally mustered out, at which time the officers were: R. R. Livingston, Colonel; William Baumer, lieutenant-colonel; George Armstrong and Thomas J. Majors, majors; William McClelland, surgeon.

Curtis' Horse was the name of a battalion of cavalry, consisting of four companies, principally recruited in Omaha, and afterwards consolidated with the Fifth Iowa Cavalry. These four companies, A, B, C and D, composed the first battalion. The final appointment of officers was made February 1st, 1862, as follows: W. W. Lowe, colonel; M. T. Patrick, lieutenant-colonel; W. B. McGeorge, adjutant; Enos Lowe, Surgeon; B. T. Wise, assistant surgeon; Jerome Spillman, chaplain.

Company A. was commanded by Capt. J. J. Lowe; Company B. by Capt. John T. Croft; Company C. by Capt. Morris Young; Company D. by Capt. Harlan Beard. All these companies were mustered into the United States service at Omaha by Lieut. J. N. H. Patrick.

Besides the above mentioned troops, Capt. John R. Porter organized at Omaha Company A., 1st Nebraska militia cavalry regiment, for home service against "confederate tribes of Indians," and Capt. E. P. Childs, of Omaha, raised an artillery detachment of Nebraska militia. In addition to this, the militia was organized throughout the State.

Omaha has become quite an important military point. She is the official headquarters and supply depot of the Department of the Platte, now under command of Gen. Crook. The Omaha barracks formerly called Sherman barracks, were built about the year 1868. More or less troops are stationed here all the time, and hence the military form quite an element in Omaha society as well as in her business affairs.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FIRST CHURCHES AND SOCIETIES.

THE FIRST MINISTERS—SOME INTERESTING REMINISCENCES BY REV. REUBEN GAYLORD, THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL PASTOR—THE FIRST CHURCH EDIFICES—OTHER CHURCHES—THE OLDEST OF THE SECRET SOCIETIES—ILLUSTRATIONS.



REV. PETER COOPER, a Methodist clergyman, then a resident of Council Bluffs, preached the first sermon in Omaha—as has been previously stated in this history—in the summer of 1854,* at Mr. W. P. Snowden's residence, which was the "St. Nicholas," or rather the Ferry Company's "claim house." The next preachers who labored in Omaha, of whom we can find any record, were Rev. Isaac F. Collins, a Methodist, who had organized a class, and Rev. William Leach, a Baptist, who soon left without forming a church. This was during the summer and fall of 1855.

In September, 1855, Rev. Reuben Gaylord visited Omaha, and in December following he moved here with his family, arriving on Christmas day. He has made Omaha his home ever since, and has watched Omaha's religious, social and commercial growth with a deep interest.

The first Congregational church building erected in Omaha and Nebraska was a brick structure located on the west side of Six-

*See pages 36 and 50.

teenth street, between Farnham and Douglas streets. When Redick's Opera House was built, some years ago, this church building was absorbed in this larger structure, and it now projects as a sort of wing on the west side. This wing was used for several years as a City Council chamber and United States court room.

At the farewell services held in it in 1867 by the Congregationalists, previous to going to the new church at the corner of Nineteenth and Chicago streets, Rev. Mr. Gaylord delivered a very interesting sermon in which he gave his religious reminiscences in Omaha, extending over a period of fourteen years. From a published extract of his sermon, we have obtained some interesting facts as follows:

"The winter of 1855-6 was of terrible severity. The Territorial legislature was then in session, Omaha having been made the capital by Acting-Governor Cuming. But few of the then residents now remain. Among the early settlers were O. D. Richardson, Mr. Goodwill, Dr. Miller, A. D. Jones, A. J. Poppleton, Major Armstrong, General Estabrook, General Thayer, T. B. Cuming, G. M. Mills, A. J. Hanscom, and their families. He [Mr. Gaylord] commenced preaching in the Council Chamber, in the old State House, on the last of December, at a salary of \$600 per annum, not more than half enough to support his family. There were here then Rev. Mr. Collins, of the Methodist church, and Rev. Mr. Leach, a Baptist clergyman. They were occupying the Council Chamber morning and evening, and he took what was left—the afternoon. There was no church organization here then, except a Methodist class of not more than six members. They organized a union Sabbath school, with Mr. B. H. Chapman as superintendent. On the 4th of May, 1856, Mr. Gaylord organized, in the Council Chamber, the first Congregational church in Nebraska with nine members—O. D. Richardson and wife, B. H. Chapman and wife, James W. Seymour, Mrs. Allen, himself, wife and daughter. Early in 1856 the first Congregational society

was organized to take measures to build a church, and T. G. Goodspeed, E. Estabrook and L. Miller were chosen trustees in July. The population of Omaha was then about five hundred. When they determined to build a church, by the foresight of Rev. G. G. Rice, then of Council Bluffs, a location, the site of the edifice, had been set apart for them by the Ferry Company, then owned by Omaha. The Methodists were then erecting their first house of worship, on Thirteenth street. The work of gathering the means to build the Congregational church, making contracts and getting material, had devolved upon the speaker, and it had been no easy task. The saw-mill on the bank of the river, owned by Mr. Salisbury, was continually besieged, and to get the lumber as fast as it was needed it was necessary to have a team ready to haul it away as soon as it was cut. The whole work he had done during the illness of his family, except when his family physician, Dr. Miller, volunteered to aid him. While the church was building service was occasionally had in the dining room of the Douglas House. By the 26th of October, 1856, they were enabled to hold services in the basement of the new church. Six new members were then added to the congregation, and a Sunday school was established with Mr. Kellom as superintendent, and from that time they had been kept up without interruption. In 1857 the Boyd brothers had completed their contract for the carpenter work on the church, Mr. Robb had finished the painting, graining and seats, and Mr. McAusland had placed the bell rim and lightning rod upon the steeple, and on the 9th of August, 1857, the dedication sermon was preached to a full house. In 1858, and again in 1860, there was a marked degree of religious interest, and in the latter year a union prayer meeting was held nightly for several weeks in this and the Methodist churches. The Episcopal church was the next organized, in the old State House, in 1856. In June, 1857, an Old School Presbyterian church was formed, with

Rev. Mr. Bergen for its minister; and a New School Presbyterian church was organized in 1860. The speaker had continued the pastor of this church until 1864, in the spring of which year he accepted the agency of the American Home Missionary Society for Nebraska and Iowa, and in the following autumn he resigned his charge of the church. Including the original nine, he had received eighty members into the church. The church had originally cost \$4,500, and was wholly furnished by the proceeds of a fair given by the ladies in the building known as the St. Charles Hotel—the first fair ever held in Nebraska."

Rev. Mr. Stowell ministered for a while in the Congregational church. Rev. W. W. Rose then preached a year or two, and was followed by Rev. E. S. Palmer. Rev. Mr. Sherrill, the present pastor, was ordained in 1869, and in 1870 took charge of the new church.

The Roman Catholics built and completed the first church edifice—a brick structure—in Omaha. It still stands on Eighth street, between Harney and Howard, but is not now used for church purposes. The cathedral on Ninth street was built about ten years ago. It is presided over by the Right Reverend James O'Connor, Bishop of the Diocese of Nebraska, who was recently consecrated, being the successor of the late lamented Bishop O'Gorman.

The second church was the First Methodist, on the west side of Thirteenth street, between Farnham and Douglas. It was erected in 1856 on the lot donated by the Ferry Company, and has since given place to a brick business building known as Church Block. The brick church on Seventeenth street was erected about 1867 or 1868.

The Episcopal congregation of Trinity Church was organized by Rev. G. W. Watson, in 1856, and in 1859 a small brick church was built on the southwest corner of Farnham and Ninth streets, on a ten-year lease, it being provided in the lease that the improvements should revert to the owner of the land at the expiration of the



CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL AND BISHOP'S RESIDENCE.

period which was in 1869. This building was then converted into the Tivoli beer garden and music hall, for which purposes it has been used ever since. The Trinity people then moved to the southeast corner of Capitol avenue and Eighteenth street, where they put up a frame church in 1867, which was destroyed by fire in 1872. Their present house of worship was soon afterwards built.

The dean of Trinity Cathedral is Rev. Frank R. Millsbaugh. The Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska is under the charge of Right Reverend R. H. Clarkson, Bishop.

The Lutheran Church, a brick building on the north side of Douglas street, between Twelfth and Thirteenth streets—Rev. W. A. Lipe, pastor—was built in 1861, and dedicated February 16, 1862.

The German Catholic Church, on Douglas street, was erected in 1869. Rev. Father Groenebaum is the priest in charge.

The Presbyterian church, a magnificent brick structure at the northwest corner of Seventeenth and Dodge streets, was built in 1869, the present pastor being Rev. Dr. G. W. Stewart.

St. Marks, [Episcopal] in South Omaha, a frame structure, was erected in 1869, the pastor being Rev. James Paterson; and St. Barnabas, also Episcopal, was built in 1870—it has no minister at present.

The Baptist church, a brick edifice at the southeast corner of Davenport and Fifteenth streets—Rev. E. H. E. Jameson, pastor—was built in 1870.

The Eighteenth street M. E. church, in charge of Rev. I. N. Pardee, was moved from North Omaha to its present location, and reconstructed in 1873.



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.



BAPTIST CHURCH.

There are numerous other church edifices, of small size, in Omaha, of recent erection, and there are about twenty-five different church organizations.

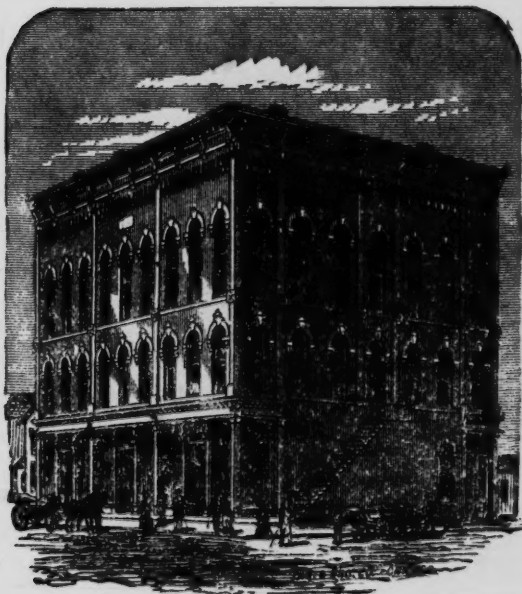
The oldest of the secret societies in Omaha is the Odd Fellows, the first lodge having been established in January, 1856. The order in this city is now composed of four or five lodges, who in common built the Odd Fellows' Hall, a handsome three story brick structure, at the northwest corner of Fourteenth and Dodge streets, about two years and a half ago, at a cost of \$18,000. The Ferry Company when laying out the town gave a lot to the Odd Fellows,

and it is on this identical lot that their hall stands.

The next oldest secret society is the Masons, Capitol Lodge having been instituted in 1857. There are now about a half-a-dozen or more lodges and orders of this flourishing fraternity, and they are erecting a three story brick hall, to cost \$15,000, at the northwest corner of Sixteenth street and Capitol avenue. The corner stone was laid on the 21st of October, 1876.*

Besides the above orders there are several other secret, as well as benevolent societies of more recent birth, prominent among which are the Knights of Pythias, who are in a flourishing condition.

*The first 72 pages of this history, which was then in the hands of the printer, was deposited, with other articles, in the corner stone.



ODD FELLOWS' BLOCK.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HISTORY OF THE PRESS.

THE FIRST NEBRASKA NEWSPAPERS—THE ARROW AND THE NEBRASKIAN—THE WEEKLY TIMES—THE OMAHA REPUBLICAN—THE TRIBUNE—THE FIRST DAILY: THE TELEGRAPH—THE HERALD—THE DAILY TIMES—THE DAILY BEE—DAILY DISPATCH—DAILY UNION—OTHER PUBLICATIONS.



ALTHOUGH the *Arrow* has been mentioned as the first Omaha newspaper, it was not strictly an Omaha institution as it was printed in Council Bluffs.* The first paper that was set up and printed with its own type and press was the *Nebraskian*, a Democratic sheet, which was established in the fall of 1854, shortly after the twelfth and last number of the *Arrow* had been published. Bird B. Chapman, who lived in Ohio, and who made it his business to come to Nebraska to run for office at every available opportunity, brought with him a complete newspaper outfit and started the *Nebraskian* with John Sherman as editor and Joe Strickland as printer. This paper was published in the interests of Chapman, who was Nebraska's first delegate to Congress. Its office for two or three years was in a building put up for it by A. J. Hanscom, where the Grand Central now stands, which was afterwards rented to John R. Porter for a store. After Chapman stopped running for office, the paper had a precarious existence in its passage

*See chapters VII and VIII.

through different hands until 1864, when the sheriff choked out of it the little life there was in it.

The *Weekly Times*, a Democratic paper, was established in 1857 by William W. Wyman, who made a very respectable paper of it, both in size and appearance. He erected during that year the brick building at the northwest corner of Thirteenth and Douglas streets, for the *Times* office and for a postoffice, he having been sometime previously appointed postmaster. He arranged the basement with the idea of putting steam presses therein at the proper time, but this idea was not carried out till some years afterwards, and then by other parties. This fact, however, shows that he comprehended the importance to which the press would soon attain in Nebraska. He disposed of his office to the *Nebraskian* being compelled to abandon journalism on account of his poor health.

The Omaha *Democrat*, started in 1858 by Hadley D. Johnson, struggled along for a few months, and then died.

The first number of the Omaha *Republican*, a weekly paper, started by Ed. F. Schneider and Harrison J. Brown, was issued on the 5th of May, 1858. In 1859 it was sold to E. D. Webster, E. B. Taylor and E. A. McClure—the second gentleman now dead, and the last now of the cracker manufacturing firm of McClure & Smith—purchased the *Republican*, and in 1863 began issuing it as a daily. In 1866 St. A. D. Balcombe bought it, and on April 1, 1871, it was consolidated with the *Tribune*, an opposition Republican paper, which had been started on the 25th of January, 1870, by J. B. Hall and others. It then became a stock company and sailed under the double head of *Tribune and Republican* until 1873, when it resumed its old name of *Republican*. Mr. Balcombe withdrew from the paper in 1875. It is now edited and managed by D. C. Brooks, under whose supervision it has been greatly improved during the past year.

The first regular daily newspaper was *The Telegraph*, the first

number being issued December 5th, 1860. It was a small four-column paper, and was "published simultaneously at Omaha and Council Bluffs." H. Z. Curtis was the editor and proprietor, and W. H. Kinsman, associate editor. It was short-lived, not running more than a year.

The Omaha *Daily Herald* was established in 1865, by Dr. George L. Miller and D. W. Carpenter, the former being the editor. Lyman Richardson and John S. Briggs published the *Herald* for a short time in 1868, and upon Mr. Briggs retiring, the firm became Miller & Richardson, Dr. Miller resuming the editorial pen. The *Herald* was published till 1874 in the building now occupied by Eberhart's Bazar, northwest corner of Douglas and Thirteenth streets, which, as already stated, was erected by W. W. Wyman, the former proprietor of the *Times*. In the above year Miller & Richardson built, and moved into, the office now occupied by the *Herald*, next to the Grand Central Hotel. The *Herald* is, and always has been, the leading Democratic paper of the Northwest.

The *Daily Evening Times*, an independent sheet, was started by Peter F. O'Sullivan, William E. Cook, John Howard, Ern W. Caldwell and Charles Collins, in 1868, and after being run here a short time was removed to Sioux City.

Julius Silversmith's *Journal of Commerce*, started in 1869, was a failure and lived but a few days.

The publication of the *Daily Bee* was commenced in June, 1871, by Edward Rosewater, and it has grown step by step, from a small sheet, to a large and influential journal, extending in circulation and wielding a powerful influence throughout the entire trans-Missouri country. It is an independent, fearless Republican paper, and as such meets with a hearty and substantial support. The *Daily Bee* is the only Nebraska journal that has had the enterprise to enter the broader field of journalism—the publication of two editions daily—morning

and evening—the former for outside circulation and the latter for the city. It is the only paper in Nebraska that had enterprise enough to inaugurate the expensive luxury of issuing illustrated annual supplements, and its supplement of 1875 was taken as a model by several other western papers for their New Year's supplement of 1876.

The *Daily Dispatch*, established in 1873, by J. C. Wilcox, soon subsided; not living more than two or three months.

The *Daily Union* was the outgrowth of a printers' strike in January, 1874. The striking printers combined and started it with high hopes of success, but the enterprise was consigned to an early grave, in the fall of the same year.

The *Agriculturist*, after an existence of five or six years, finally died in October of the present year.

There are several other papers and periodicals, of comparatively recent birth, which are all doing well. The *Omaha High School*, a monthly by J. F. McCartney; the monthly *Nebraska Journal of Commerce*, by Taylor Bro's.; the *Weekly Post and Beobachter*, a German paper by Dr. A. Sorel; the *Weekly Pokrok Zapadu*, (Progress of the West) a Bohemian paper, published by Mr. E. Rosewater; the *Weekly Danske Pioncer*, by Mark Hansen; the *Weekly Folkets Tidning*, a Swedish paper; the *Conductor's Monthly Magazine*, by W. H. Morse; the monthly *Excelsior*, a juvenile sheet by Clemie Chase; the *Jolly Joker*, also a monthly juvenile publication, by Chas. Bunce; *All Sorts*, a similar monthly by W. R. Bartlett; and the *Midland Monthly*, a literary periodical, which, by the way, is a magazine of considerable literary ability, being conducted by Henry D. Estabrook and J. M. Ross.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE TELEGRAPH.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF EDWARD CREIGHTON, WHO BUILT THE FIRST LINE TO OMAHA, AND WHO ERECTED THE PACIFIC LINE ACROSS THE PLAINS—HIS NUMEROUS TELEGRAPHIC UNDERTAKINGS AND BUSINESS ENTERPRISES—HOW HE BECAME A MILLIONAIRE—THE PRESENT IMPORTANCE OF OMAHA AS A TELEGRAPHIC POINT.

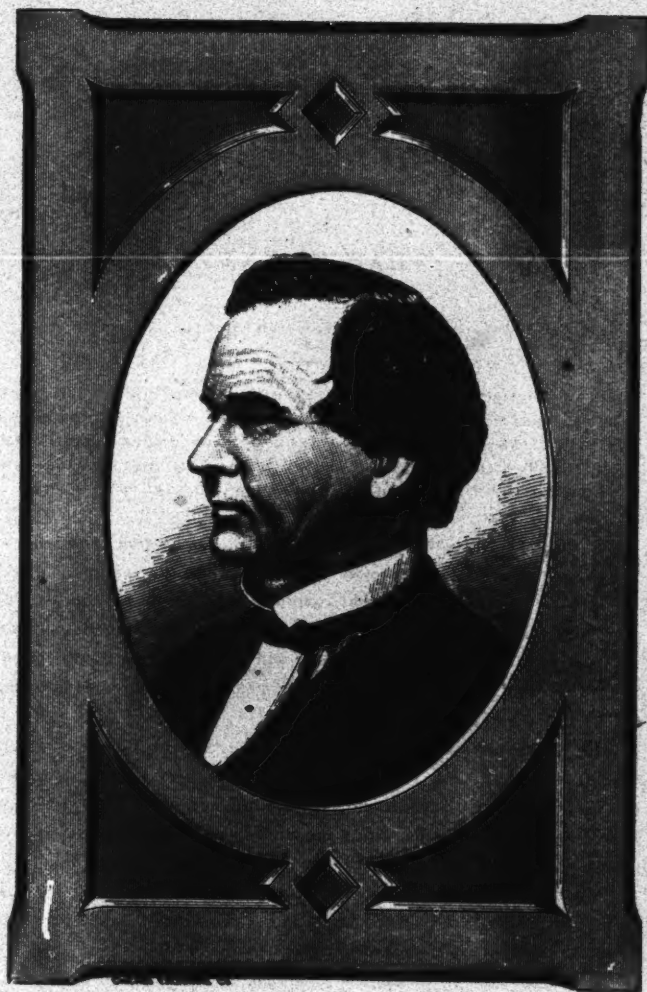


THE history of the telegraph, in connection with that of Omaha, will prove an interesting chapter, and it cannot be told without relating the history of the late Edward Creighton, who built the first line for Stebbins to Omaha, from Missouri, and soon afterward the Pacific line across the plains, thus acquiring a national fame and a princely fortune.

Mr. Creighton was born August 31st, 1820, in Belmont county, Ohio. His youth and young manhood were spent first as a laborer and afterwards as a contractor in building railroad and telegraph lines. He drifted to the Southern States, and steadily pursuing this business, he there accumulated some \$12,000 or \$15,000.

In 1856 he paid a short visit to Omaha, his brothers, John A. Creighton, Joseph Creighton, and James Creighton, and his cousin James Creighton, who were residing in Omaha at that time.

In the fall of 1856 he was married in Dayton, Ohio, to Miss Mary Lucretia Wareham, and in 1857 he removed to Omaha, which



THE LATE EDWARD CREIGHTON,
Builder of the Pacific Telegraph.

became his permanent home. He built the brick house on the north side of Chicago street, between Seventeenth and Eighteenth, soon after his arrival, and occupied it ever afterwards.

He engaged in the lumber business for a short time, obtaining his stock from Pittsburg by steamboat. During the year 1858 and a portion of 1859, he was in Arkansas building a telegraph line from Jefferson, Missouri, to Ft. Smith, Arkansas, for Stebbins, the telegraph contractor, who had certain territory in which to construct lines. After finishing this job, Mr. Creighton returned to Omaha, and in 1860 built the Missouri & Western line for Stebbins from St. Louis to Omaha, the first one to reach this city, the second line arriving here being the Illinois & Mississippi Valley line in 1861.

Mr. Creighton had already conceived the idea, in 1859, of building a telegraph line from the Missouri river to the Pacific ocean. He soon afterwards went to Cleveland, Ohio, and there consulted with Jephtha H. Wade, a rich man and a heavy stock-holder in the Western Union line, about the undertaking. Mr. Wade directed him to communicate with Gen. Carpentier, of California, who was president of the California State Telegraph Company, then running a line between San Francisco and Sacramento.

After some considerable delay, however, the Western Union Company, through the efforts of Mr. Wade, agreed to furnish Mr. Creighton with the means for a preliminary survey of the route between the Missouri river and the Pacific ocean. This was during the winter of 1860-61. A trip across the plains in those days without an escort was a very perilous feat, and one which very few had the courage to perform, as the whole country swarmed with Indians, and settlements were few and far between. But Mr. Creighton, then in the prime of his manhood, did not hesitate to start out on this dangerous trip. He went from Omaha to Salt Lake by stage coach. He remained at Salt Lake some little time making the acquaintance

of Brigham Young and getting him interested in the overland telegraph project. He not only succeeded in this, but he made a warm friend of Brigham Young, who ever after continued so.

Wade, in the meantime, had gone to San Francisco by steamer, and he sent for Mr. Creighton to come on from Salt Lake to Sacramento to assist him in making arrangements with the California parties. He then pushed on for the Pacific coast, making his preliminary survey on horseback by the way of Virginia City, following the pony express route to Sacramento. It was a fearful ride, and he suffered intensely, his face being severely frost-bitten. This southerly route was considered more practicable than a route farther north, where it was feared the heavy snows would interfere with the telegraph lines.

An agreement was made that Creighton should build a line from Julesburg to Ft. Laramie, thence through the South Pass to Salt Lake, to connect there with a line from the Pacific coast, which was to be put up by the California parties. The Missouri and Western line, the reader is reminded, had been extended from Omaha to Julesburg.

Mr. Creighton and Mr. Wade came back by steamer, and soon after his return, early in the spring of 1861, Mr. Creighton engaged a very large number of men and teams, and began the work at once. One great stimulus to the rapid completion of the work was the passage of a bill by Congress, granting a subsidy of \$40,000 per annum for ten years to the Pacific Telegraph Company, as the corporation, which had been organized for the undertaking, was called, and in which company the Western Union owned the controlling stock.

It was a lively race between Mr. Creighton and Mr. Street, who had the superintendence of the construction of the California line, as to who would reach Salt Lake first, and they made a wager that

the victorious line should take the earnings of the other until it reached Salt Lake. They also made other wagers. Mr. Creighton got there first with his line. He reached Salt Lake on the 17th day of October, 1861, beating the California line just one week, when the lines were connected and the Atlantic and Pacific oceans were united by the electric current.

As an inducement for Mr. Creighton to undertake this enterprise, the company gave him the privilege of taking \$100,000 in stock, and allowed him a certain length of time to accept or reject the offer. He did not hesitate a moment, but accepted the stock. So sanguine was he of success that he invested all the money he had, besides hypothecating his interest in a New Orleans line, which he had built some years previously. For the \$100,000 stock that he purchased of the Pacific Telegraph Company as an investment, he paid only about eighteen cents on the dollar. He thus became the possessor of one-tenth of the company's stock, which was \$1,000,000. Soon after the Pacific line was completed, the Western Union doubled their stock, and the Pacific company tripled theirs, thus increasing Mr. Creighton's shares to \$300,000. The Pacific Company's stock then rose from twenty cents to eighty-five cents. Mr. Creighton then sold \$100,000 or one-third of his stock, for \$85,000, and then had the snug sum of \$200,000 left.

Mr. Creighton was general superintendent of the construction, and was general manager of the line from Chicago to Salt Lake from the time it was completed till 1867. A line was in process of construction from Chicago to Omaha, and Mr. Creighton, as a piece of strategy, ran the Pacific line over to Council Bluffs, making it the terminus temporarily, and thus forcing the Chicago company, who thought he was going to push right on to Chicago, to lease their line to the Pacific Telegraph.

Mr. Creighton invested a large portion of his profits, arising from

his telegraph speculations, in the freighting business from Omaha across the plains to Denver and Salt Lake, and afterwards to Montana, before the days of the Union Pacific railroad. In 1863, when Montana was first invaded by the gold hunters, he fitted out several large wagon trains with merchandise for that territory, upon which immense sums were realized. The first of those Montana trains was composed of thirty teams, in charge of James Creighton, who in thirty days' sales made \$33,000, which he brought back to Omaha with him. The next year he took a train of forty mule teams to Montana, where Mr. John A. Creighton had remained as salesman, and the amount realized from this trip was \$52,000. There were others of Mr. Creighton's freight trains that turned out equally as well.

In 1864 Mr. Creighton ventured into the cattle business in Nebraska, and the Indians ran off all his herds. He started again, this time on Laramie plains, he being the pioneer cattle man in that section of the West. He had immense herds of cattle roaming the plains, from which he supplied the Union Pacific construction trains with beef while the road was being built from Cheyenne westward. He continued in the profitable business of raising cattle, as well as horses, sheep and mules, until his death.

When the First National Bank was started in 1863, Mr. Creighton became a heavy subscriber to the stock, and was elected president, and he ever afterwards retained that position.

In 1866 Mr. Creighton built a telegraph line to Montana from Salt Lake, his brother John A. Creighton superintending the work, and about the same time he erected a line from Julesburg to Denver. While the Union Pacific railroad was being constructed, he took large contracts for grading, and also put up the company's telegraph lines.

It is a fact that Mr. Creighton conceived the idea of securing

telegraphic communication with Europe by running a line up the Pacific coast to Behring's Strait, across which he intended to throw a submarine cable, and then extend a line through the Russian possessions. He induced the Western Union company to make the coast survey, and the scheme no doubt would have been carried out, had not the successful laying of the Atlantic cable rendered such an undertaking unnecessary. It was the Atlantic cable that stopped the work, and had that failed we would to-day, through the efforts of Edward Creighton, have had telegraphic communication with Europe via Behring's Strait.

Mr. Creighton was also heavily interested in the Omaha & Northwestern railroad, and did considerable towards building up Omaha in various other ways. He erected the handsome three-story brick block called after his name, and with others he loaned \$100,000 to the Omaha Hotel Company, with which they completed the Grand Central. During his residence in Omaha he amassed a fortune of over \$1,500,000 by his numerous enterprises and undertakings. He made several liberal donations during his life-time to the Catholic church, of which he was a member, and also to St. Mary's Convent, and Mercy Hospital. He died on the 5th of November, 1874, aged 54, from the effects of a second stroke of paralysis. His wife, a most estimable, amiable and charitable lady, followed soon afterwards, she dying on the 23d of January, 1876. By her will the vast property was divided among the relatives of her husband and herself, and the sum of \$200,000 was provided for the erection of a Catholic college at Omaha to be called after Mr. Creighton's name. This last bequest was made in accordance with a wish often expressed by Mr. Creighton during his life-time.

Omaha has much to thank Edward Creighton for. In making Omaha the initial point of the Pacific telegraph, he virtually made this city the eastern terminus of the Union Pacific; and it was his influence that attracted to Omaha various enterprises, as

well as capital, as he made this city his base of operations.

In 1863 Omaha had three wires—one from St. Louis, one from Chicago, and one to San Francisco. The Western Union consolidated with the Pacific telegraph and the two lines have since been operated as one. In 1870 the Great Western Telegraph was built from Chicago to Omaha, connecting with the Pacific coast over the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroad wires.

The Atlantic & Pacific Telegraph Company established their lines west from Omaha to San Francisco in 1869, and in 1873 constructed a line between Omaha and Chicago to connect their western and eastern systems.

Twenty-three wires now enter Omaha, each one terminating here. There are now in Omaha fifteen telegraph offices, of which the Union Pacific has nine, located at their headquarters, train dispatchers' offices, depots, shops, bridge offices, etc. The others are those of the Western Union and Atlantic & Pacific Telegraph Companies, the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, the Chicago & Rock Island, Chicago & Northwestern, B. & M. in Nebraska, and the Kansas City, St. Joe & C. B. railroad companies.

In these various offices are employed no less than forty operators, besides the clerks, messengers, line repairers, battery men, etc.

The commercial lines, namely, the Western Union and Atlantic & Pacific, make Omaha the relaying station for all the telegraphic communication between the East and West, every message passing through Omaha being repeated. This involves considerable labor and requires a large force of operators. It is estimated that the commercial telegraph companies here handle about 1,500 messages daily, including local and through business. They also handle from 15,000 to 20,000 words of press dispatches. The Union Pacific railroad offices in this city send and receive probably one thousand messages daily, including train orders.

Thus it will be seen that nearly 2,500 telegrams are sent and received in this city daily, and estimating the press report at a basis of twenty words to the message, will swell the number to 3,500 messages, which will amount to 70,000 words or 350,000 letters.

In 1863 a message of ten words from Omaha to New York, cost \$5.65; from Omaha to Chicago, \$3.55; from Omaha to St. Louis the same; and other points in the same ratio.

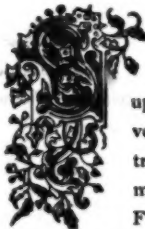
Now a message of ten words from Omaha to New York costs \$2.00; to Chicago, 75 cents; to St. Louis, 75 cents; night messages, half rates, with privilege of twenty words. This great reduction has been brought about by competition.

Frank Lehmer is the manager of the Omaha office of the Western Union line, and Mr. L. M. Rheem has charge of the Atlantic & Pacific office, Mr. J. J. Dickey being the superintendent of the latter line.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DAYS OF STEAMBOATING AND STAGING.

A PROFITABLE BUSINESS WHILE IT LASTED—HOW A COUPLE OF PILOTS MADE A BIG STAKE ON ONE TRIP—PORTER AND DEUEL, STEAM-BOAT AGENTS—"THERE'S MANY A HOLE IN A SKIMMER."



TEAMBOATING on the Missouri was a large and profitable business from the time Omaha was located up to the year 1867, when the railroads reached here. A very large amount of money was invested in river transportation during the years that Omaha remained the principal head of navigation on the Missouri. Freights were sometimes very high, and to show what was occasionally realized on a single trip, we will relate a little incident. In the fall of 1856 a couple of adventurous river pilots bought an old stern-wheel steamer in St. Louis, and loaded it with goods, putting on all it could possibly carry. They made the trip to Omaha, reaching here about the middle of November, and delivered their freight at five cents per pound from St. Louis. They then returned to St. Louis with their steamer before the river closed, clearing on the venture enough money to not only pay for their boat, but to have a surplus of a few thousand dollars beside.

The principal steamboat agents during the period previous to the railroads were John R. Porter and H. P. Deuel, under the firm name of Porter & Deuel. Judge Porter came here in the spring of 1856 and went into the commission business with Riddler, and

shortly afterwards with Bremen, with whom he continued in business two or three years. The first fire in Omaha was the one that destroyed their store in December, 1856, by which \$9,000 was lost.* The building stood on the lot now covered by the Grand Central Hotel. In 1859 Mr. Deuel succeeded Bremen, and the firm became Porter & Deuel. They were the agents for the packet line and the Hannibal & St. Joe, railroad. Mr. Porter was the first railroad ticket agent in Omaha, and used to carry the tickets in his hat, something after the style of the first postmaster, Mr. A. D. Jones. He continued in the steamboat and railroad ticket business for fifteen years, Mr. Deuel being connected with him for the last ten years of that period.

The arrival and departure of steamers was from two to seven per week, and their arrival was always regarded as quite an important event. When the dull sonorous whistle of a long expected boat was heard far off to the south there would be a grand rush, pell-mell, of nearly all the people in town, on foot, on horseback, and in vehicles of every description, to the landing place and there they would impatiently await her arrival. It was customary in those days, while a boat was unloading her freight, to have a grand dance on board, by the citizens. The first boat up in the spring was always considered the great event of the boating season, as it brought up a fresh supply of goods of every description to replenish the stocks of the merchants who had sold out pretty much of everything during the long winter.

The Western Stage Company ran eastward from Omaha through

* Omaha now has a fire department which is without doubt the best one in the West. The Pioneer Hook and Ladder Company was organized May 1st, 1860, as an independent institution, the members owning the property. The first engine was a hand machine the "Fire King," which arrived here in the Spring of 1856. Steamer No. 1 arrived in the fall of 1867, steamer No. 2 in 1868, and No. 3 in 1870. The Union Pacific has also a steamer, the "Durant," at the railroad shops. The discipline of the Omaha fire department is excellent, and their success in extinguishing fires has been remarkable so far.

Iowa, and between this line and the packets there existed a great rivalry to catch the passengers. The overland stages also ran from Omaha to Kearney, connecting there with the main line for California and Colorado.

Porter & Deuel would, without being certain as to the arrival or departure of boats, nevertheless sell all the tickets possible to passengers who wished to go down the river to travel east by the Hannibal & St. Joe railroad. Of course they would say that the boat would be up by the next day, or that it was expected every hour. Two or three days and nights might elapse, and no boats would appear, probably having been stuck on a sand-bar or detained by heavy wind. The passengers would become uneasy and turbulent. The Western Stage Line men would solicit them to go east by their coaches, and advise them to get their money back. Then the men would go to Porter & Deuel and ask for their money. The reply would invariably be, "Gentlemen, don't get restless, we expect a boat up every hour. We can't refund your money, as we have already remitted it to headquarters, and we don't propose to take it out of our own pockets." The disappointed passengers would wait another day, and becoming more restless than ever, they would call again on Porter & Deuel, who would finally be obliged to pay for their meals and furnish them with blankets to sleep in the warehouse rather than refund the money. When affairs got to this crisis men began to swear and make threats, and Porter & Deuel would consequently keep out of the way till a boat did arrive, and even then the craft might be too small to accommodate all, or the passenger capacity might be sold ahead, and then there would be more trouble. But the agents always managed to get out of these little scrapes, for "there's many a hole in a skimmer," as Deuel used to say then, as he does now.

Porter & Deuel continued in this business until 1867. Judge Porter

built the office at the northeast corner of Farnham and Tenth streets for the St. Joe road, the second one to reach Omaha, soon after the Chicago & Northwestern. Mr. Porter was the agent for this road, and resigned upon his being elected Police Judge in 1869.

In 1868 the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railroad was completed. Harry Deuel became the agent, and has ever since been connected with the road.

John A. Horbach was also engaged in the steamboat ticket and freight business in those days, and Capt. W. P. Wilcox, of the dry-goods firm of Stephens & Wilcox, was one of the early steamboat captains on the Missouri, being engaged for many years in navigating the stream.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE RAILROADS.

THE CHICAGO AND NORTHWESTERN THE FIRST TO REACH OMAHA—
 THE KANSAS CITY, ST. JOE AND C. B. CAME SECOND—THE CHI-
 CAGO AND ROCK ISLAND THIRD—THE CHICAGO, BURLINGTON AND
 QUINCY FOURTH—THE OMAHA AND NORTHWESTERN—THE B. AND
 M. IN NEBRASKA—THE BUILDING OF THE UNION PACIFIC AND
 SOME INCIDENTS CONNECTED THEREWITH—GRAND CELEBRATION
 AT OMAHA UPON ITS COMPLETION—THE BRIDGE—ILLUSTRATION—
 THE INITIAL POINT FIGHT—THE OMAHA AND REPUBLICAN VALLEY
 RAILROAD—A PLEASANT REMINISCENCE OF GEN. SHERMAN.



AS long ago as 1855 the Mississippi & Missouri River railroad, now known as the Chicago & Rock Island, was pushing its way slowly westward from Chicago, and Omaha and Florence were then rivals for the terminus. Of the two routes—one down the Pigeon Creek Valley, and the other down the Mosquito Valley—the company selected the latter, thus disappointing the high hopes of Florence, but the road was not completed till the spring of 1868, the financial crash of 1857 having had a tendency to retard its progress.

The Chicago & Northwestern railroad was the first to reach Omaha, the first train coming in from the East on Sunday, January 17th, 1867.

Next came the St. Joe & Council Bluffs road—now called the

Kansas City, St. Joe & Council Bluffs, or as it is more popularly known, the Omaha & St. Louis Short Line. Frank Moores is the Omaha ticket agent of this road.

The Burlington & Missouri, now called the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railroad, was completed in 1868. Harry Deuel is the Omaha ticket agent of this road as well as of the Chicago & Northwestern and Chicago & Rock Island railroads.

The Omaha & Northwestern was begun in 1869, and was built to Herman, a distance of forty miles. During the present year it was extended seven miles further to Tekamah. The first president of this road was Mr. James E. Boyd, who was greatly instrumental in organizing the company. Had it not been organized just at the time it was, Omaha would not have the road. The proposition to submit the voting of bonds for the Omaha & Southwestern road was then being agitated, and the Omaha & Northwestern company was hurriedly organized so that their bonds could be submitted at the same time. The stock in the Omaha & Northwestern went rather slow after a certain amount had been disposed of. Then James E. Boyd took three-twentieths, or one-sixth of the whole amount, William A. Paxton two-twentieths, and John A. Morrow two-twentieths. The other stock-holders were John A. Redick, Herman Kountze, Edward Creighton, Jonas Giese, John A. Harbach, C. H. Downs, Frank Smith, G. M. Mills, and the Millards.

The Omaha & Southwestern was commenced in 1869 and built to Lincoln, the capital, a distance of fifty miles. The president was S. S. Caldwell, and among the stockholders were John Y. Clopper, Clinton Briggs, Henry Gray, Frank Murphy, A. S. Paddock, and Frank Smith. In 1872 this road passed into the hands of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railroad, which corporation extended it to Kearney, where it unites with the Union Pacific, about one hundred and ninety miles from Omaha. This line is now called the Burlington

& Missouri in Nebraska. The general offices are located at Omaha, having been moved here from Plattsmouth about a year ago. Mr. William Irving is the general superintendent.

It is over the B. & M. in Nebraska, the Atchison & Nebraska and the Missouri Pacific that Omaha now has a through line to St. Louis on the west side of the Missouri river. This line was established in the early part of this year, and is called the Omaha & St. Louis Cut-off. H. D. Shull is the Omaha ticket agent.

Omaha now has six passenger trains daily to and from Chicago, four to and from St. Louis, besides the Union Pacific trains, and those of the Omaha & Northwestern and B. & M. in Nebraska. Omaha has also direct railroad communication with Sioux City and St. Paul.

The history of the Union Pacific railroad—the grandest and most important enterprise of the kind that was ever undertaken—is still fresh in the public mind, but nevertheless that history, however briefly related, will ever prove of great interest to the reader, especially if he be a resident of Omaha. We shall speak more especially of the facts and incidents relating to Omaha, as this is a local history.

The project of a railroad to the Pacific ocean had long been agitated, in a vague and indefinite way, until in 1853, the government sent out four different parties to the West to investigate the practicability of such a road, and upon their making a favorable report, the scheme was discussed at various times. At last, in the year 1862, Congress passed an act authorizing the building of a trunk road from the one hundredth meridian, which was two hundred miles west of Omaha. There were to be three branches, one from the western boundary of Iowa, one from Sioux City west and the other from the western boundary of Missouri, all of course to connect with the main line. The routes of the Sioux City and southern branches were afterwards changed.

The initial points were to be designated by the President of the United States, and on the 17th of November, 1863, he fixed the initial point of the main branch, by an order, as follows: "At a point on the western boundary of the State of Iowa, opposite section ten, in township fifteen, north of range thirteen, east of the sixth principal meridian, in the Territory of Nebraska." The act for the construction of the road provided that the branch reaching the one hundredth meridian first should build the remainder of the line and receive a donation of 13,875,200 acres of land.

A company for the undertaking of this stupendous project was soon organized, and on the morning of December 3d, 1863, a dispatch came from headquarters to the engineer at Omaha directing him to begin work at once. The good news soon circulated all over the city and created the most intense enthusiasm, and in the afternoon over one thousand people collected in the vicinity of the old telegraph crossing on the bottoms, and "broke ground" with great ceremony. After a prayer for the success of the undertaking, the first earth was removed by Governor Saunders and Mayor Kennedy, of Omaha, and Mayor Palmer, of Council Bluffs. Guns were fired, and deafening cheers arose from the assemblage. Governor Saunders, Mayor Kennedy, Dr. G. C. Monell, Hon. A. J. Poppleton, and A. V. Larimer each made a speech full of what was then considered extravagant predictions. George Francis Train, the great enthusiast, was present, and in his speech predicted that the Union Pacific railroad would be completed before the year 1870. His audience considered that a little too extravagant and laughed at him, but he was correct. President Lincoln and many prominent men sent telegrams to Omaha in regard to the auspicious opening of the project, and they were received with great enthusiasm by the crowd, to whom they were read.

The next spring, 1864, the work of grading was begun. After about one hundred thousand dollars had been spent on the due westerly

course, it was abandoned, because it was too hilly to allow the road to be completed to the one hundredth meridian in time to save the charter, as it was claimed, and two new routes were then surveyed. One was to the north and thence west. The other was to the south, nearly to Bellevue, and thence northwest. The latter was called the "ox-bow," and was chosen by the company, notwithstanding the violent opposition of the people of Omaha, who had great fears that the company intended to cross the Missouri river at Bellevue and leave Omaha out in the cold. The greatest anxiety existed at Omaha at this time. Everything was finally harmoniously settled, however, and upon the abandonment of the idea of starting from Bellevue, Omaha breathed easy once again.

The grading was then rapidly pushed forward, and the laying of the track followed almost as fast. Every twenty miles was duly inspected by the proper persons, appointed for that purpose, and numerous excursions were made to the end of the track, as it was moved from point to point. Fifty miles of the road were completed and in running order by the 1st of January, 1866. The ties for the road from Omaha to the Platte valley were obtained from the Missouri river bottoms. Being of cottonwood they were put through the "Burnetizing Process," which made them impervious to either animal or vegetable parasites. The ties for the remainder of the road were of hardwood and were obtained from Michigan, Pennsylvania, and other distant states, and frequently cost as high as two dollars and a half per tie laid down in Omaha. There was a break in railroad communication between Omaha and Des Moines, a distance of one hundred and thirty-three miles, and consequently everything had to be transported by teams from that point or by steamboats up the Missouri. The seventy-horse-power engine of the railroad shops at Omaha was transported in wagons from Des Moines to Omaha. The company started their extensive shops soon after beginning the work of build-

ing the railroad, and they were completed in the fall of 1865. The shops consist of a dozen or more large and substantial brick structures, covering an extensive area of ground. They give employment to between six and seven hundred men, among whom over half a million of dollars is paid out annually. Mr. J. H. Congdon is superintendent of the locomotive department, and Mr. George E. Stevens is the superintendent of the car department.

There were two hundred and sixty miles laid during the year 1866; two hundred and forty miles in 1867; and from January 1st, 1868 to May 10, 1869, five hundred and fifty-five miles were laid, completing the road.

The great work was finished in three years, six months and ten days from the time it was started. This was about seven years sooner than the limit fixed by Congress.

In the construction of the road there were used 300,000 tons of rails, 1,700,000 fish-plates, 6,800,000 bolts, 6,126,375 ties, and 23,505,500 spikes.

The Casement brothers, contractors, frequently laid the track at the rate of five miles per day.

During the building of the road, and afterwards, the Indians occasionally molested the employes, and on one occasion, in August, 1867, they attacked a freight train near Plum Creek. The fireman and engineer were instantly killed, and the body of the fireman was thrown into the fire-box of the locomotive and burned to a crisp. One of the brakemen escaped, and running along the track saved an approaching train from the same fate.

The celebration at Omaha in honor of the completion of the road and its junction with the Central Pacific was a grand affair. It was a general holiday for everybody. Private and public buildings were ornamented with decorations of all kinds—flags, festoons, banners and mottoes. A telegraph line was run to a

building on Capitol Hill, and direct communication was had with Promontory, where the golden spike, at the junction of the two roads, was being driven into the last tie—of laurel wood—with a silver hammer. When the last blow was given at Promontory it was instantly known at Omaha, where one hundred guns were fired in rapid succession when the announcement was made.

A procession was formed in the afternoon on Farnham street, and with flags and banners flying, marched to Capitol Square where the meeting was presided over by Gov. Saunders. Eloquent speeches were made by Gen. Clinton B. Fisk, of Missouri, and Gen. Manderson and Judge Wakeley, of Omaha, amidst the most unbounded enthusiasm.

The illumination in the evening was a brilliant spectacle. The city was one blaze of light, while the display of pyrotechnics was very beautiful. It was the grandest day that has ever been recorded in the history of Omaha.

While the Union Pacific railroad was in process of construction and for some time afterwards, Omaha was a very busy city, and during those few years she made rapid strides, both in acquiring population, in general improvements, and in wealth.

The next thing necessary was a railroad bridge at Omaha over the Missouri. This structure was not commenced until after the Union Pacific had been finished, although the initiatory steps had been taken in 1866 by getting an act passed through Congress. A fight arose as to its location, whether it should be a low bridge at the "Telegraph Poles," or six miles down the river at "Child's Mills." Council Bluffs objected to the "Telegraph Poles," and both Council Bluffs and Omaha opposed "Child's Mills." The location where the bridge now stands was finally agreed upon. Omaha voted \$250,000 in bonds as aid to the bridge, in consideration that she, should have the main transfer depots, general offices, machine shops,

etc. Conncil Bluffs voted \$200,000 in bonds on the same condition but the company never received them, and of course Omaha obtained the principal benefits to be derived from the enterprise. The Bridge Company was authorized by special act of Congress to issue bonds to the amount of \$2,500,000, and these bonds were sold in England.

The Boomer Bridge Company, of Chicago, on the 4th of September, 1868, secured the contract of building the bridge for \$1,089,500, the time of its completion to be November 10, 1869. They were greatly delayed and did not get the first cylinder ready for sinking until March, 1869. In July following the Union Pacific took hold of the work, the contract having been annulled with the Boomer Bridge Company.

The structure was completed on the 25th of March, 1873. It is two thousand seven hundred and fifty feet long—eleven spans of two hundred and fifty feet each—and is composed entirely of iron. The superstructure is supported by piers, each formed of two iron pneumatic tubes, sunk in sections, and filled with cement masonry, each tube eight and a half feet in diameter. About five hundred men were employed constantly in the construction of the bridge, with the exception of seven or eight months suspension of work: and ten steam engines were used in hoisting material, driving piles, excavating, and otherwise putting the different parts of the bridge in position. The elavation of the bridge above high water mark is fifty feet. The bridge is approached from the Iowa side by a grade about one mile and a half long, thirty-five feet rise to the mile, and on the Nebraska side there is a trestle-work, now filled in with earth, about fifty feet in height and about seven hundred feet long. This bridge, one of the largest in the country, is said to have cost over \$2,000,000. It is a masterpiece of engineering and mechanical skill.

When the work was finished, the transfer of passengers by boats was done away with of course, and the old wooden depots

on the bottoms and on Ninth street were abandoned as soon as the present large brick depot, with iron truss roof, was completed, at a cost of over \$100,000.



UNION PACIFIC BRIDGE OVER THE MISSOURI RIVER.

Upon the completion of the bridge a fierce struggle arose between Council Bluffs and Omaha as to which place should be the initial point of the Union Pacific railroad, the real question being whether the Union Pacific should cross its trains over the bridge to Iowa, or the Iowa roads come over to Nebraska. Both parties were obstinate, and as the Iowa roads held out, they being obliged to under the Iowa laws which gave them existence, the Union Pacific resorted to a little strategy. They organized a "Bridge Transfer Company," and operated it as a separate institution, thus making a transfer at Omaha, and conveying passengers and freight over the bridge by transfer trains.

Council Bluffs had always maintained that the eastern terminus of the road was in Iowa, according to President Lincoln's order, and they finally brought a mandamus suit against the Union Pacific

compelling them to show cause why they should not operate their road as a continuous line to and from the Iowa side of the Missouri river. Judge Dillon decided the case in favor of Council Bluffs, compelling the road to run its through trains to and from the Iowa side of the river, and allowing them to still charge the usual toll on the bridge. This decision was affirmed by the Supreme Court of the United States, and the Union Pacific began running their through trains to and from Spoon Lake station, in compliance with this order, in May of the present year.

The general offices of the Union Pacific railroad are located at Omaha. Mr. S. H. H. Clark is the general superintendent; Mr. Thomas L. Kimball is the general ticket agent; E. P. Vining, general freight agent; J. W. Gannett, auditor; O. F. Davis, land commissioner.

The Union Pacific company is now building a branch road called the Omaha & Republican Valley railroad. It is being constructed from Valley Station to Wahoo, in Saunders county, and the cars will be running from Wahoo to Omaha by the 1st of January, 1877. Saunders county recently voted \$140,000 in bonds to aid this road, which is to be pushed on through Butler, Polk and other counties to the Republican Valley. This new route opens up to Omaha the richest agricultural section of the state.

This brief sketch cannot be more appropriately closed than by quoting the following extract from a chapter of Dr. Miller's "Home Gossip," which appeared in the Omaha *Herald* three or four years ago:

"We may have told the story before, but it will bear telling again as *apropos* in this connection, besides being a good thing in itself. When Durant took a locomotive and baggage and flat car for the first excursion over the Union Pacific railroad, General Sherman was the chief character in a party of fifteen or twenty gentle-

men who rode out to the first 'end of the track,' Sailing's Grove, about fifteen miles distant. Mr. Poppleton and others were in the party. There was no passenger car in the 'train.' The flat car, with boards placed on nail kegs and covered with robes, answered as a substitute. The baggage car contained a great many baskets and bottles, which were not empty. Durant seldom had such vehicles and vessels empty in those days. The party was jolly in going out, and hilarious in coming in. The inspiration of riding over fifteen miles of completed Pacific railway inspired all, and particularly the hero of 'the march to the sea.' Speeches were in order as the 'train' halted, and everybody was anxious for a speech from Sherman. Loud calls and shouts succeeded the usual preparatives, and the soldier arose to the full height of the occasion. He recounted his own experience in sinking five or more thousands of dollars, long years ago, in California, in an effort to start the Pacific railroad, reviewed the dream of other days, and wound up with the expression of a hope, half in despair, that he *might* live to see the day, but could scarcely expect it at his age, when the two oceans would be connected by a complete Pacific railroad. In thirty-six months from that time the distinguished soldier scaled the Rocky Mountains in one of Pullman's Palaces at the rate of thirty miles an hour, over one of the best constructed and best managed railways in America."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OLD LANDMARKS, AND INCIDENTS CONNECTED THERE-
WITH.

THE OLD STATE HOUSE AND TERRITORIAL CAPITOL NUMBERED AMONG THE THINGS OF THE PAST—THE OLDEST BUILDING IN OMAHA—PIONEER BLOCK—SOME OLD RESIDENCES—THE OLD DOUGLAS HOUSE—THE OLD CITY HOTEL—THE FIRST POST OFFICE BUILDING AND THE POSTAL SUCCESSION—THE COURT HOUSE—THE HERNDON HOUSE: ITS UPS AND DOWNS AND THE WAR BETWEEN J. T. ALLAN AND MRS. BRONSON—HOW GEORGE FRANCIS TRAIN CAME TO BUILD THE COZZENS HOUSE.



ANY of the old Omaha landmarks have disappeared, having given place to more stately buildings. Among the buildings that have long been numbered among the things of the past are the old State House and the Territorial Capitol, of which no trace now remains. Without doubt the oldest building now standing in Omaha is the one-story frame house now standing just north of the City Hotel on Tenth street. It was the fifth house erected in Omaha, and was built in 1854 by the first sheriff, P. G. Peterson. It was in that house that Dr. C. A. Henry was chained to the floor as a prisoner.* Peterson sold it to A. J. Poppleton and W. N. Byers, the latter of whom lived in it for two or three years. It was afterwards occupied by John H. Sahler; and Mr. Poppleton himself lived in it for over two years.

*See page 77.

Pioneer Block was the first brick block, comprising two or more stores, that was erected in the city. It is known as Nos. 178 and 180 Farnham street. One of the stores was built by Dr. C. A. Henry and the other by H. H. Vischer and Allen Root, both of whom are still residents of Omaha. Jones & Wood kept a drug store in 1856 and 1857 in the building now occupied by C. F. Goodman, the wholesale druggist.

The only brick building now standing in the city, built as long ago as 1855, is the Caldwell, Hamilton & Co. bank building. It was erected by three or four gentlemen connected with the Ferry Company for a business house, and was rented and occupied as soon as completed, which was in 1856.

The brick house on the block bounded by Webster and Burt, and Twenty-first and Twenty-second streets, was put up in 1856, and was the first brick house erected in the northern part of the city. It was built by Governor Izard for a residence.

The frame residence at the southwest corner of Dodge and Eighteenth streets was built by Secretary Cuming in 1855 or 1856, and his widow, a most respected lady, still resides there with her brother, Hon. Frank Murphy.

Dr. Lowe's brick residence, southwest corner of Harney and Sixteenth streets, was built in 1857.

Gen. Thayer built the brick house at the northeast corner of Davenport and Sixteenth streets, and T. G. Goodwill erected the brick house just east of it, both in 1857.

Maj. George Armstrong built the brick house on the north side of Dodge street, between Fourteenth and Fifteenth, in 1857, and the next year he built the brick house on the south side of Dodge, between Sixteenth and Seventeenth, now owned and occupied by A. Cahn.

The brick house at the southwest corner of Capitol avenue and

Ninth street, now fast going to decay, was built by George W. Crowell in 1856.

The brick house on the north side of Dodge, between Fifteenth and Sixteenth streets, now owned by James G. Chapman, was built in 1856. George A. McCoy, who still resides in Omaha, kept a boarding house there during the summer and fall of 1856.

The old Douglas House, a frame structure, now standing at the southwest corner of Thirteenth and Harney streets, was built early in 1855, and was kept for a while by Mr. Goodwill, now dead, and was the best hotel in the Territory at that time. The steward was Mr. Ignace Scherb, who still resides in Omaha. The Fourth of July 1855, was celebrated at this house by a grand barbecue, of which Mr. Scherb had charge. Several speeches were made, one of them being by Secretary Cuming, and a regular programme of exercises was carried out. The celebration ended with a grand ball in the evening. The Douglas House was the first regular hotel opened in Omaha. George M. Mills has owned the building from 1856 to the present time.

The building at the southwest corner of Harney and Eleventh streets was in 1856 one of the leading hotels in the country, and was called the City Hotel, the second one opened in Omaha. It is now occupied as a residence, and is owned by Ezra Millard.

There were in 1856 not enough buildings to define the outlines of the streets. It was thought at that time that Harney street would be the leading thoroughfare.

In the spring of 1856 the post-office was established in the building on the south side of Harney street, between Eleventh and Twelfth, the mail having increased to such proportions that it could no longer be carried in a stove-pipe hat as postmaster Jones had been in the habit of doing. A man named Lindley had acted for a while as Mr. Jones' deputy, and had promised to take the office if Jones

would resign. This was done, and Lindley then put the office into the hands of a Mormon named Frank. Lindley had used an axe box for the post-office, and Frank improved on this by utilizing a bushel basket. W. W. Wyman finally got the office, and after a while moved it into his own building, northwest corner of Thirteenth and Douglas streets, and held the position until 1864, when George R. Smith was appointed. He was succeeded in 1870 by Mr. John H. Kellom, who was soon superseded by Joel T. Griffin. Caspar E. Yost, the present incumbent, stepped into the position in 1872. The old frame building, mentioned above, in which Frank did business and had the post-office for a while, stood between Judge Lake's residence and the cracker factory, and was burned down a few months ago.

In the spring of 1857 the City Council deeded to the county a block then known as Washington Square, bounded by Fifteenth, Farham, Sixteenth and Douglas streets, on condition that a court house should be built thereon. All the lots, except the ones now occupied by the court house, were sold and the proceeds applied in the erection of the building, which was begun in 1857 and finally completed about 1859 or 1860. Armstrong & Bovey did the stone and brick work, and John Davis the carpenter work.

The Herndon House was built in 1857 by George Bridge, Dr. George L. Miller and Lyman Richardson. The city authorities had made a proposition in the summer of 1857 to give a site for a hotel of the size and character of the Herndon to any person who would bid to erect such a building for the smallest lot of land. Bridge, Miller and Richardson secured the bid and the city gave them a block and a half of lots in the vicinity of where the Herndon now stands. They sold all the lots except two, on which they began the hotel with the money thus obtained. They then borrowed sixteen thousand dollars from the city in scrip, which was also used in the construction of the building, which when completed was

named "The Herndon House," after Lieutenant Herndon, who was lost on the steamer, "Central America," which was on her way up from Panama to New York, about that time. The house was opened and run in magnificent style by M. W. Keith, and was the finest and largest hotel west of Chicago. It was considered a mammoth undertaking in those days, especially for a place the size of Omaha. After passing from landlord to landlord* it finally went into the hands of the sheriff on account of the failure of the original builders and owners to meet their obligations incurred in its erection. Mr. J. T. Allan then took hold of it while it was in the hands of the law, and ran it for a while as a sort of *bon ton* boarding house and latterly as a hotel.

Mr. Allan was succeeded in the fall of 1866 by Mrs. Bronson who leased the house from Dr. Monell, who had become the owner of it.

In a little volume entitled "Western Incidents connected with the Union Pacific Railroad," published in 1867, Silas Seymour, the author, gives the following amusing bit of history in connection with the Herndon House, the incident happening in October, 1866, upon his return to Omaha from the West:

"We found that the Herndon, which has long been regarded as one of the most prominent institutions of Omaha, was in a sort of transition state, and its guests, as the farmers say, 'between hay and grass.' Our long time friend and distinguished host, Mr. Allan, had been called upon by Dr. Monell, the landlord, to surrender its use and occupation into the fair hands of Mrs. Bronson, who had recently leased it, and stood ready to enter upon the duties of hostess as soon as Mr. Allan could find it convenient to evacuate the

*D. W. Hitchcock, of Chicago, the general passenger agent of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railroad, was one of the old timers of Omaha, and was the clerk of the Herndon House when the late Frank Coffman was the landlord.

premises, all of which the said Allan seemed in no haste to do. An entire week had been spent by the parties in strategy and legal skirmishing, during which it was not unusual for Mr. Allan, on visiting the kitchen in the morning, to find Mrs. Bronson's cooking stove standing in the place of his own, which had been thrown over the adjoining fence during the night; and not unfrequently were the guests of the house stopped in the middle of a meal (while waiting, perhaps, for more warm cakes) by intelligence from the waiter that the stove had just been thrown out of the kitchen. Fortunately for us, however, Mrs. Bronson's stove was outside of the fence when we arrived, and remained so during the following day, Sunday. * * The difficulties at the Herndon House were amicably arranged on the Monday following our arrival from the Rocky Mountains, and Mrs. Bronson, the new lessee, was fully installed in quiet possession."

About the year 1870 the Union Pacific railroad company rented it for its headquarters, and moved into it from the old State House which was then just opposite on Ninth street. They have occupied the Herndon House ever since, and in 1875 they purchased it for \$42,000 from Dr. Monell, who had finally become the owner of it. It is known now as the Union Pacific headquarters.

George Francis Train was stopping at the Herndon House in 1867, while an editorial excursion was visiting Omaha. One day in the dining room he sat at a table near a broken window, through which the wind was blowing at a lively rate. He complained about it, and after every expedient, except putting in a new glass, had been tried unsuccessfully to stop up the hole, he paid a darkey ten cents a minute to stand in front of the window between it and himself until he had finished his meal. He then vowed he would build another hotel immediately, and that very afternoon, sure enough, he purchased two lots and had men at work digging the cellar, and in sixty days

he had the Cozzens House completed, at a cost of \$40,000. Before it was finished he had it rented to the Cozzens, of West Point, New York, from whom it takes its name, for \$10,500 per year. They ran it for a year, and then Philo Rumsey took it at a rental of \$5,000 per year, and kept it for three years, closing out in the fall of 1871, since which time it has stood vacant as a hotel.

CHARTER XXIX.

OLD SETTLERS.

THE OLD SETTLER'S ASSOCIATION—ITS OBJECT—A NOTABLE RE-UNION—OLD SETTLERS' BALL AT THE HERNDON—A PARTIAL LIST OF OLD SETTLERS—DEATH OF WILLIAM D. BROWN, THE PIONEER OF OMAHA AND ORIGINAL CLAIMANT OF THE TOWN SITE.



IN January, 1866, the old settlers of Omaha formed the "The Old Settlers' Association," it being composed entirely of those men who located at Omaha previous to the year 1858. One of its objects was social intercourse, and another was to collect and preserve important statistics and interesting facts of the past history of Omaha for future reference for the historian. The officers of the association were: Dr. Lowe, President; Dr. G. L. Miller, vice president, A. D. Jones, secretary and treasurer. Mr. Jones as secretary faithfully performed his duties as long as the association existed. He did considerable correspondence with different persons who had resided here in the vicinity at an early day, and thus obtained many historical facts. He has now in his possession, in the defunct society's "little tin trunk," a vast mass of letters, newspaper clippings, and manuscripts of his own, all relating to the early history of Omaha, and from which we have been allowed to extract considerable information.

Soon after the organization of the society Dr. Miller had a re-union of the old settlers at his residence. It was a notable gathering. There were present, Wm. D. Brown, the first ferryman and the man

who first claimed the town site; A. D. Jones, the first postmaster and surveyor; Wm. P. Snowden, the first *actual* settler, and the first auctioneer; A. J. Poppleton, the first lawyer; John Logan, the first man married in Omaha; Dr. Lowe, one of the original founders of the town; Dr. Miller, the first physician; John Withnell, who assisted in laying the first brick in Omaha, in the old State House; O. B. Selden, who fired the first forge; Col. A. R. Gilmore, the first U. S. land officer in Nebraska; James Megeath, one of the first merchants in Omaha; H. D. Johnson, who was one of the first men to run for Congress; Capt. McPherson, who ran the first steam ferry; Capt. Downs, who assisted A. D. Jones to survey the town; Gen. Estabrook, the first United States District Attorney for Nebraska; Joseph W. Paddock, the first clerk of the first House of Representatives; Col. Miller, father of Dr. Miller; R. N. Withnell, and many others, the names of whom we have been unable to ascertain.

On the evening of Tuesday, January 1, 1867, a grand "Old Settlers' Re-union" was held at the Herndon House. The honorary managers were: Dr. Enos Lowe, Hon. A. S. Paddock, Hon. A. J. Poppleton, Col. Lewis Merrill, J. H. Lacey, Francis Smith, Hadley D. Johnson, Hon. John I. Redick, Maj.-Gen. Philip St. George Cook, Brig.-Gen. Myers, James M. Woolworth, James Megeath, Thomas Davis, Dr. G. C. Monell, Maj. J. W. Paddock and Augustus Kountze. The floor managers were: J. F. Coffman, George Wallace, Reuben Wood, A. S. Patrick and George M. Lloyd.

The "Old Settlers' Society," we regret to record the fact, had but a brief existence, and died for the want of breath sometime in 1868 we believe.

The following is a partial list of old settlers, taken from an old publication, the dates representing the time that they first stepped on Nebraska soil:

Wm. D. Brown, June 3, 1850; Enos Lowe, June 25, 1853; H. D.

Johnson, October, 1853; A. D. Jones, November, 1853; C. H. Downs, April 23, 1854; A. R. Gilmore, May 24, 1854; Wm. P. Snowden, July 11, 1854; O. B. Selden, September 23, 1854; J. W. Paddock, September 24, 1854; Wm. Gray, September, 1854; John Withnell, October, 1854; S. E. Rogers, October, 1854; A. J. Poppleton, October, 13, 1854; Lorin Miller, October 19, 1854; Geo. L. Miller, October 19, 1854; James G. Megeath, November, 1854; E. Estabrook, June 23, 1855; John Davis, March 16, 1855; John Evans, March, 1855; H. H. Visscher, April 3, 1855; David Richards, April, 1855; R. N. Withnell, May 2, 1855; Edwin Patrick, May 7, 1855; E. H. Warner, May 10, 1855; John Logan, July 9, 1855; O. P. Ingalls, September 7, 1855; John P. McPherson, October, 25, 1855; Rev. R. Gaylord, December 25, 1855; M. Shinn, April, 1855; J. M. Marston, November 18, 1855; W. W. Wyman, June 5, 1855; Allen Root, May 16, 1855; A. B. Moore, April 22, 1854; D. C. Sutphen, September 4, 1857; H. B. Paris, November 15, 1857; M. B. Riley, August 11, 1857; Daniel Gantt, May 12, 1857; J. W. Pickard, December 19, 1855; S. A. Orchard, November 15, 1855; J. H. Sahler, August 29, 1856; R. S. Knox, January 3, 1856.

This list is very incomplete and we regret that we are unable to fill it out as it should be. The number of first actual settlers is very small, but if we draw a distinction between first settlers and old settlers we can name quite number of persons who may be regarded as among the latter. Any person who came to Omaha previous to 1860 ought to be and is regarded as an old settler. Among those whom we can call to mind as old settlers at Omaha or in the vicinity besides those mentioned in the above list, and who reside here at the present time are the following—and several of those here mentioned may be numbered among the *first* settlers of the town:

A. J. Hanscom, the Creightons, C. W. Hamilton, Herman Kountze,

James G. Chapman, Dr. J. K. Ish. O. F. Davis, John Green, Peter Windheim, the Beindorfs, Cam Reeves, the Reeses, Richard Kimball, St. John Goodrich, C. S. Goodrich, Ezra Millard, J. H. Millard, the Barkalows, the Durnalls, Timothy Kelley, Dr. Plummer, Peter Frenzer, Joe Frenzer, J. M. Clark, the McAuslands, H. O. Jones, Tom Murray, Capt. Marsh, Harrison Johnson, James Smith, Geo. Smith, M. Hellman, A. Cahn, Wm. Sexauer, the Demarests, John A. Harbach, G. M. Mills, H. R. A. Pundt, Vincent Burkley, Judge Lake, Hon. James M. Woolworth, Mrs. Frank Coffman, the Patricks, S. R. Brown, Randall Brown, J. J. Brown, Wm. F. Sweesy, A. J. Simpson, E. F. Cook, F. A. Schneider, J. F. Sheely, John M. Sheely, John R. Porter, Harry Deuel, J. R. Meredith, Dr. Peck, the Roeders, Edwin Loveland, Fred. Davis, John McCormick, Josiah S. McCormick, the Homan family, Fred. Court, Peter Hugus, Eb. Dallow, Senator P. W. Hitchcock, Senator A. S. Paddock, John Yerger, S. M. Curran, George Silvester, Byron Reed, John Campbell, E. L. Eaton, J. W. Tousley, Rev. W. N. McCandlish, Joel T. Griffin, Fred Drexel, Joe Redman, David Harpster, Henry Grebe, Charles Karbach, Frank Murphy, J. T. Allan, E. A. Allen, Major George Armstrong, Judge Briggs, Gen. J. M. Thayer, (removed to Wyoming, of which Territory he is Governor) the Dees, Mrs. W. W. Wyman, Mrs. Cuming, (Mrs. W. D. Brown and family,) Mrs. Jesse Lowe and family, F. L. Ruf, Levi Kennard, G. A. McCoy, Charles Powell, Ignace Scherb and brother, the Shull family, J. S. Gibson, the Barkers, Wiley Dixon, Hon. John I. Redick, now Associate Justice of New Mexico, the Yates family, D. Sullivan. Tom Riley, John Riley, Frank Dellone, Fred Dellone, James M. Winship, John Evans, Dr. J. P. Peck, W. A. Gwyer, W. H. S. Hughes, B. E. B. Kennedy, the Hartmans, James E. Boyd, Wm. A. Paxton, G. W. Doane, Frank Kleffner, A. N. Frick, D. Whitney, E. B. Chandler, the Medlocks, Father Curtis, Peter Malone, Michael and Jerry Linahan, Paul

and A. J. Harmon, Charles P. Birkett, Samuel E. Rogers, Jerry Mahoney, Ed. F. Tennery, D. S. Parmelee, John Lutz, E. V. Smith, Silas A. Strickland, Pat and Michael Connolly, Thos. O'Connor, J. W. Van Nostrand, A. N. Ferguson, Pat Dinan, M. Lavin, Pat McDonough, Geo. I. Gilbert, Milton Rogers. Martin Dunham, Thomas Martin, Joe Fox, Dr. Wm. McClelland, W. J. Kennedy, John Kennedy, John Kennelly, John Petty, the Forbes family, Henry Livesey, Thomas Swift, Luke McDermott, the Lehmer family, Charles Turner, C. M. Aumock, Fred. Kumpf, J. C. Wilcox, E. S. Seymour, Mrs. C. W. Koenig, the Misses McCheane, Charles Childs, Fred. Krug, B. P. Knight, James McArdle.

(William D. Brown, the first pioneer and the original owner of the spot where Omaha now stands, died February 3d, 1868. Dr. Miller, the editor of the *Herald*, paid the following tribute to his memory :

"Another old settler is dead. Not only an old settler, but we may add, perhaps the eldest among the early settlers of Omaha and Nebraska. William D. Brown, the original founder of Omaha, died at his residence in this city on Monday evening last in the fifty-fifth year of his age, leaving a wife and four children, three daughters and one son, to mourn his loss. The circumstances of Mr. Brown's death are as follows :

(On Monday, a week ago, Mr. Brown visited Council Bluffs for the purpose of arranging some property interests, and, among other things, to pay some taxes. He is known to have had about ninety dollars in his pocket. He was met by several old friends in his usual health, which, by the way, was somewhat broken, when he first arrived, but having been there a day or two, he was subsequently found on the streets in a condition which called for the active assistance of old friends, which he received, being as well known in the neighboring town as he is in Omaha. He had been badly beaten and bruised in his face and over his person by some unknown ruffian,

and, as he alleged, robbed of his money. He took the stage for Omaha on Saturday. Upon arriving on the corner of Thirteenth and Douglas, he undertook to walk to his residence, but he fell two or three times in the effort, and was finally taken home by kind friends in a carriage, where he arrived in a very exhausted state, suffering much from the injuries which undoubtedly hastened his death.)

“Mr. Brown stood emphatically prominent in this and neighboring communities as the veteran of all pioneers in Nebraska. In a career of nearly forty years in the West, we find him known through all the chief towns from Galena to Ft. Des Moines and Omaha in this character. Always just in the advance of civilization to the westward, he was guided by an intuitive judgment, based, of course, upon his strong common sense, upon that line of latitude, and to those points which mark the channels of commercial intercourse and development. In 1854 we found him upon this very spot, the first “claim” to the soil upon which this city now stands being his.) He was an equal owner in the original Omaha Town and the Council Bluffs and Omaha Ferry Company, a large property holder and a prominent man. He was almost as much a part of Omaha as the ground on which it has been built up, a sort of land mark by the side of the broad path which city he assisted to map out to all the older residents, as well as to many of the new. In his more vigorous life he was a man of unsullied integrity and sound intelligence, of a genial heart and nature which engaged all who knew him in warm sympathy with him, and, in expressing our own, we know we express the regrets of all who knew him at his loss.

“The old settlers are rapidly passing away. Two years ago this class of our citizens who had been in the Territory in 1855, met in social gathering at the residence of the editor of this paper. William D. Brown and Addison R. Gilmore, since dead, were there. The

idea of an Old Settlers' Association took shape in that, to us, the most interesting gathering we ever enjoyed, which has since been shamefully neglected—an idea that ought to receive practical attention if we would preserve in proper permanence of form the rich incidents of the early life of our growing city and state."

CHAPTER XXX.

CONCLUSION.

THE OMAHA OF TO-DAY—HER WHOLESALE TRADE, BANKS, MANUFACTURES AND RAILROADS—HER SCHOOLS—ILLUSTRATIONS: HIGH SCHOOL, GRAND CENTRAL HOTEL, AND POST-OFFICE—HER FUTURE PROSPECTS.

HE Omaha of to-day is a beautiful city of twenty-five thousand inhabitants. Her growth for the last few years has been gradual and substantial. The people who have settled here during this latter period came with a determination of permanently locating. Her numerous costly and handsome public and private buildings, the large majority of which were erected within the last six years, are evidences of the city's substantial character.

Omaha, owing to her location, has become an important railroad and commercial centre. Her railroads—eight in all—reach out in every direction, and her wholesale trade covers a vast extent of territory. The annual sales of her wholesale dealers foot up nearly \$10,000,000.

Omaha is fast becoming quite a manufacturing town. Ten years ago she did not have a single manufacturing establishment. To-day she gives employment to over 2,000 men in her factories and workshops alone. She has the largest Smelting and Refining Works in America, employing about one hundred and seventy-five men and doing an annual business of \$5,000,000; she has five or six breweries, mak-

ing fifteen thousand barrels of beer per annum. She has one distillery doing a business of \$700,000 and paying a government tax of \$316,000 per year; one linseed oil mill manufacturing annually 2,500,000 pounds of oil cakes, and 120,000 gallons of oil; one large cracker factory; two large machine shops; about a dozen cigar factories, turning out nearly 2,000,000 cigars every year; three soap factories, making nearly 100,000 pounds per month; two broom factories; one extensive carriage factory and several smaller ones; four brick yards, making 5,000,000 brick annually; one cigar box factory, making 100,000 boxes per year; a baking powder factory; a fence factory; two vinegar factories; one grist mill; a safe factory; several pork-packing establishments, together with numerous other industrial and manufacturing establishments too numerous to mention, all conducted by private capital, besides the Union Pacific machine shops, employing nearly seven hundred men and paying out in Omaha a vast amount of money. Omaha's manufactures are growing steadily in importance and in number from year to year.

Omaha's banks rank among the very best and soundest in the country, and are institutions of which our city may well feel proud. There are four banks in all—the First National; the Omaha National; Caldwell, Hamilton & Co.; and the State Bank of Nebraska.

The educational facilities of Omaha both in her public and private schools are unsurpassed by any other western city. She has the largest and finest school houses of any city of like size in the country, and her High School building is probably not equalled in size or cost, or beauty of architecture or location by any other high school building in the United States. It was completed in 1872 at a cost of \$250,000. The system of instruction in the public schools is of a thorough and systematic character from the lowest to the highest grade.

Among the private schools Brownell Hall, a young ladies' seminary and school for young boys, is fast attaining a popularity equal to some of the older institutions of the East for its excellent educational and moral training. It is under the auspices of the Episcopal Church.

Mt. St. Mary's Academy, a Catholic school, is another educational institution which is a credit to Omaha.



OMAHA HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING.

The Nebraska Institute for the Deaf and Dumb, located at Omaha, was organized and a school opened in April, 1869, in a rented building in the southwestern part of the city. In the fall of 1871, a substantial brick building, three stories and an attic, was completed at the expense of the State, the location being about two miles and a half northwest from the northern limits of the city. Another building, an addition, is now in process of erection, and will cost \$15,000. This institution is in a very prosperous condition.

The Great Western Business College is an institution that has flourished in Omaha for several years, and has met with good success, owing to the fact that it is in every way worthy of patronage. It was started in 1873, by Prof. G. R. Rathbun, who is the present principal.



GRAND CENTRAL HOTEL.

Omaha's hotel accommodations are commodious and first-class in every respect. The Grand Central Hotel, built during the years 1871, 1872 and 1873, by a joint stock company, was opened by Mr. Thrall, the present landlord in the fall of 1873, and it has attained a national reputation as being one of the finest hotels in the country, and the best house between Chicago and San Francisco. It is a five story brick structure, one hundred and thirty two feet square, costing nearly \$300,000, and is one of the institutions of the city.

The Metropolitan is also an excellent hotel, and is liberally patronized. It is a home-like, cosy house, is first-class in every partic-

ular, and is kept by a gentleman, Mr. Van Namee, who "knows how to run a hotel."

There are several other hotels, of the second class, that afford fair accommodations. As Omaha is an important railroad centre and located on the great highway of the nation, the hotels are all doing a thriving business.

The Postoffice and United States Court House, a four-story white stone structure, completed in 1873, at a cost of about \$450,000, is one of the most substantial as well as one of the handsomest government buildings in the United States.

Omaha is the headquarters of the military department of the Platte, and as such derives considerable benefit from the government disbursements among troops, stationed at Omaha barracks, and for supplies purchased here and distributed throughout the various posts of the department.

Omaha is a metropolitan city in many respects. There is a stir



POST OFFICE AND U. S. COURT HOUSE.

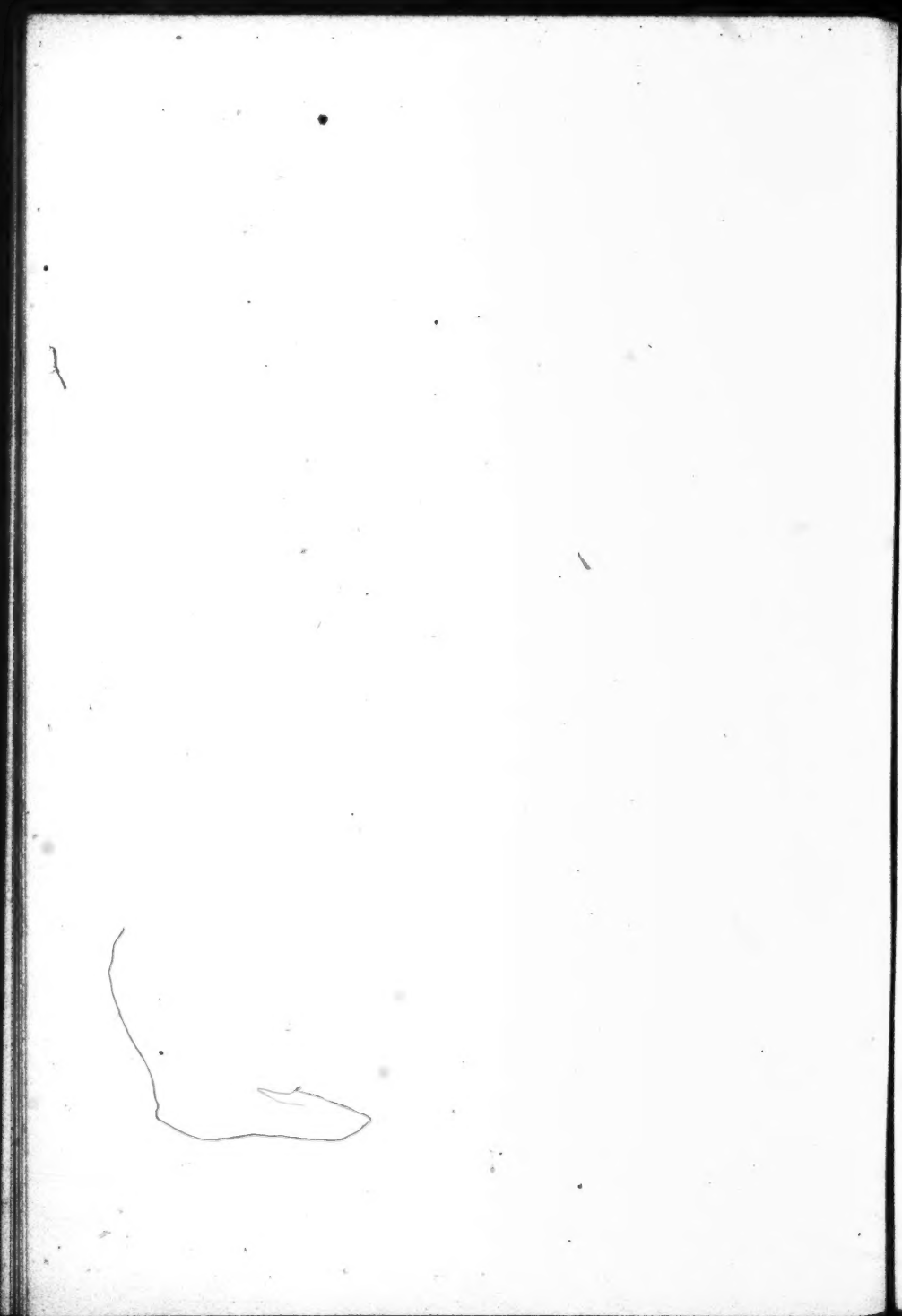
and a business enterprise about her that at once attracts the attention of the stranger, who, in comparing her with other western cities, finds that she is without a doubt the "Queen City of the Missouri Valley."

As the metropolis of Nebraska, which is one of the thriftiest agricultural states in the Union, she is steadily gaining ground in population, wealth and importance, and whatever obstacle may present itself in the way of her progress, her experience of the past has taught her to meet it with a bold front and soon overcome it. And when another centennial anniversary shall have rolled round, Omaha will no doubt have become a city of the magnitude of Chicago, and perhaps even greater. In closing this concluding chapter of this centennial history we quote the following most appropriate extract from the historical address of Gen. Estabrook, on July 4th, 1876:

"As the fabled Minerva came full-fledged from the brain of Jupiter, so was Omaha born with her fighting garments upon her. The casual observer looks upon her rich endowments and admires but little does he realize that for all these she has fought her way inch by inch, through all these long, weary years, against foes within as well as foes without, who lurked at every corner and who have never wearied in their watching for an opportunity to stab, to cripple, to destroy. But in every emergency Omaha has been and is still equal to her task. If she seems weary with her duties to-day, she goes forth to-morrow to encounter and overcome new and greater obstacles with the strength of inspiration."

ADVERTISEMENTS.

FIRST-CLASS BUSINESS HOUSES.



W. M. BUSHMAN,

Southeast Corner of Douglas and Fifteenth Streets,

OMAHA, NEBRASKA,

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL DEALER IN

DRY GOODS,

The Largest Stock, the Greatest Variety,

THE LOWEST PRICES!

One Price Only, and Strictly Cash!

Mr. W. M. BUSHMAN commenced business in Omaha in the Spring of 1873. His business principles have always been THE CASH SYSTEM BOTH IN BUYING AND SELLING: ONE PRICE ONLY, AND THAT THE LOWEST; NO MISREPRESENTATIONS. It is to these business principles, to which he has strictly adhered, that he owes his success. IN BUYING FOR CASH, he is enabled to purchase goods at CHEAPER FIGURES than if he bought on credit, and the customer receives the benefit of the transaction, as Mr. BUSHMAN can thus sell at LOWEST PRICES. His ONE PRICE CASH SYSTEM enables him to avoid the expense of costly books, book-keepers and poor accounts, so that he does not have to charge extra prices to make up for extra expenses and losses that would be incurred by the credit system.

Mr. BUSHMAN has an elegant and commodious store, well stocked, and he employs none but polite and attentive clerks, thus making his establishment one of the most pleasant trading places in Omaha.



**DEWEY & STONE,
FURNITURE.**

THE FINEST DRUG STORE IN THE WEST.

CHARLES H. ROBERTS,

(Successor to E. A. ALLEN.)

DRUGGIST AND CHEMIST,

Dealer in PERFUMERY, TOILET ARTICLES AND FANCY GOODS,

Cor. Fifteenth and Douglas Streets, Omaha, Neb.

B. WELF.

CHAS. McDONALD.

WELF & McDONALD,

Importers and Manufacturers of

Ladies Fine Cloaks, Suits and Mantles,

250 Farnham Street, Opposite Grand Central Hotel, Omaha, Neb.

LADIES' SUITS A SPECIALTY.

Suits in all the latest styles and most durable fabrics.

THE LADIES' UNDERWEAR DEPARTMENT

Is complete, and every garment is of the most perfect make.

Babies' French Embroidered Robes and Dresses, and Embroidered Cashmere Cloaks for Children, Children's Hoods and Socks.

Egypht Robes, & Cloaks, Ladies' Sleeveless Jackets & Cardigan Jackets with Sleeves, Ties, Ruchings, Collars and Cuffs; Neckwear of every description.

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Cloaks and suits made to order; perfect fit guaranteed or no sale.

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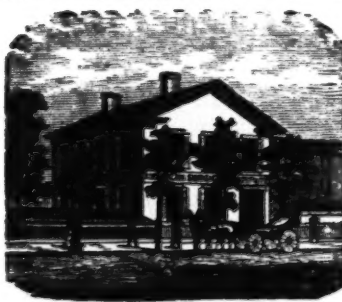
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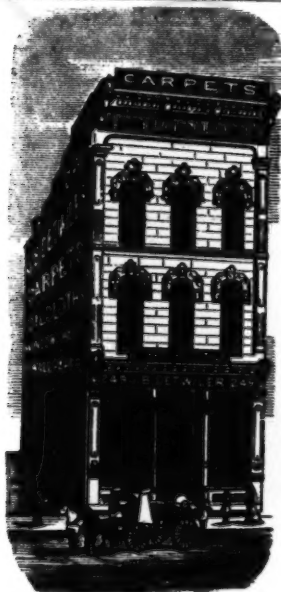
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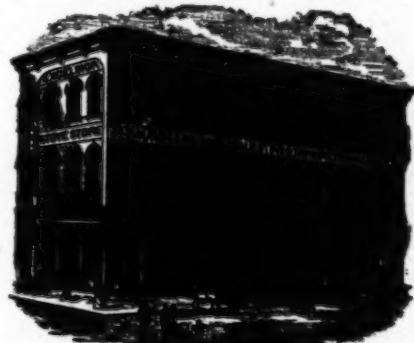
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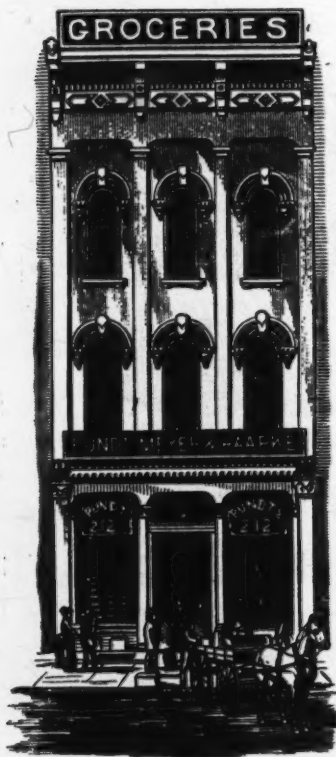
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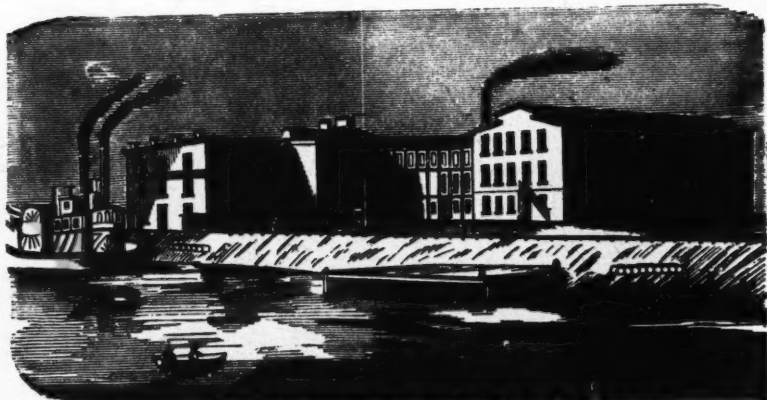
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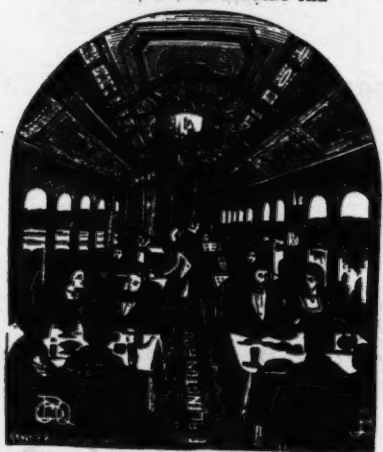
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